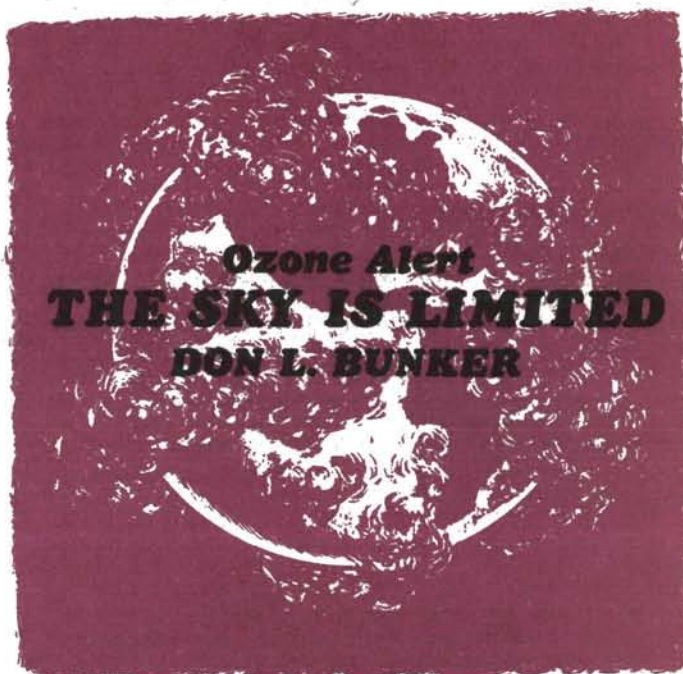


BRECHT & THE FBI SANDER L. GILMAN

THE
NATION

NOVEMBER 30, 1974

50 cents



POLLSTERS AND PUNDITS

The Tricks of the Trade

Lee Benson, Kevin Clancy, John Kushma

ZAIRE: FISTICUFFS FOR MOBUTU **Stephen Weissman**

Three Women Work It Out

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LETTERS

shameful and wrong

Appleton, Minn.

The grain companies which contracted to sell 125 million bushels of wheat and corn to the Soviet Union were asked by the President of the United States to break their contracts. This was shameful and wrong.

Perhaps the grain companies which had contracted to sell 125 million bushels of wheat and corn to the Soviet Union had sold short and did not have the wheat and corn to deliver so breaking of the contract was what they needed to save \$250 million or more. Perhaps the grain companies had the grain on hand for delivery under their contract at much less than they could get on the domestic market, so breaking the contract makes it possible for them to sell on the domestic market at a profit of \$250 million or more.

No matter how you look at this act, the breaking of the contract was shameful and wrong and the grain companies had to make money.

Elmer A. Benson

praise from inside

Steilacoom, Wash.

I have just finished Robert and Barbara Sommer's excellent "Showcase Prisons: The Best Are the Worst" [*The Nation*, Oct. 19]. . . . Three cheers for *The Nation* for publishing this highly insightful commentary. . . .

This is my fifth federal penitentiary and, although I am only 34 years old, I have been confined for sixteen of the past twenty-one years. I am currently researching and writing a lengthy book on the state of the entire American criminal justice (?) system, with particular emphasis on the penal scene.

The fact that eludes most legislators regarding correctional systems is that 95¢ of each correctional dollar is spent on custody. When the naive American taxpayer wakes up, perhaps he/she will compel the state and federal legislators to begin following suggestions such as the one offered by the Sommers: alternative correctional opportunities. Lest we all lose sight of where we are *really* going in criminal justice, I only remind you that prisons are still *schools of criminal dispensation*; I know because I am working on my doctorate par excellence!!!!

Raymond E. James

Los Angeles Times

I am writing a history of the *Los Angeles Times* and the Chandler family, and their influence on the development of Southern California. I would appreciate any stories, letters, memorabilia, etc. Please write to 1500 South Holt, Los Angeles, Calif. 90035.

Bob Gottlieb

correction

Los Angeles, Calif.

I am writing to correct an erroneous impression in "Vietnamese Students: Will We Ship Them Back to Thieu?" by Ron Ridenour [*The Nation*, Oct. 12]. . . .

In approximately seventeen years of litigation involving two appearances before the Supreme Court, I was represented by essentially three legal firms at various periods. During these periods, my different counsels did have the advice of various attorneys. However, at no time was I directly represented by Frank Pestana.

I am anxious to credit Maynard J. Omerberg as my attorney during the last ten years of litigation during which he successfully reversed the previous trends of unfavorable decisions through dedicated labors and innovative measures as an attorney. Mr. Omerberg's efforts in my case were completely successful by stopping execution of the deportation order. . . .

David Hyun

EDITORIALS

The Olive Branch and the Gun

"Today, Mr. President," Yasir Arafat declaimed at the conclusion of his address to the U.N. General Assembly, "I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand." If there was an olive branch, it was stuck in the barrel of the gun, where it would hardly impede the passage of the terrorist's bullet.

Equally phony was Arafat's advocacy of a democratic Palestinian state in which Moslems, Christians and Jews would live together in peace and harmony. Yosef Tekoah's rebuttal was no masterpiece of diplomacy either ("On October 14 the United Nations hung out a sign reading, 'Murderers of children are welcome here!'", in view of the fact that the vote to let Arafat state his case was 105 to 4, with twenty abstentions. Once or twice would have been enough for that remark, but he kept repeating it, forgetting that his audience included the representatives of a considerable number of states where tribal massacres are preferred to voting. But he was perfectly right in his assertion that the gist of Arafat's proposal was the destruction of the state of Israel.

It was a bad day for the United Nations. Both sides revised history to suit their ends, but Arafat's distortions were the more outrageous. From beginning to end, he pictured "Zionists" as imperialists, colonialists and neo-colonialists, racists, etc. Since for the present he seems to be in command of the Palestine Liberation Organization, he can find various rostrums for his demagoguery, but the U.N. should not have been one of them. The U.N. sponsorship only served to harden the position of both sides and to recruit small-nation support for the most reckless Palestinian nationalists. It is by no means clear how many, or which, Palestinians recognize Arafat as their leader, but he pictured himself as an Arab Messiah chosen to lead the oppressed and deprived masses—not only of the Middle East but of the whole world—out of their misery. He spoke, he asserted, "in the name of every human being struggling for freedom and self-determination . . . this is the true perspective in which to set the question of Palestine. I shall now do so for you, keeping firmly in mind both the perspective and the goal of a coming world order."

It was incredible, but he went on in this vein for an hour and a half. The General Assembly heard him vowing to undo what it had agreed upon two years after the end of World War II—that both Jews and Arabs had a right to co-existence. Even the Soviet Union, Egypt and some of the Arab states see no other solution. Arafat represents those Arab elements who thirty years ago vowed to drive the Israelis into the sea, and who were spiritual allies of Hitler in his plans for world domination.

The reaction of some of the Jews of New York to this inflammatory nonsense was understandable, but it provided more good publicity for Arafat. After his speech he stood before the General Assembly, enjoying his ovation like a victorious prizefighter. Unfortunately, also, he has lunatic counterparts among his enemies. A spokesman for the

Jewish Defense League threatened, with a .38 revolver lying on a desk in front of him, to kill Arafat before he left New York.

Almost predictably, the frightfulness increased in Israel, with maddened Jews burning the bodies of Arab guerrillas who had been killed after they machine-gunned tenants of an apartment building in Beit Shean, and PLO spokesmen pretending that the terrorist raid was part of a military operation which will continue until the Israelis agree to negotiate with them.

In the end it is conceivable that the Israelis will have to negotiate with the PLO, but it is safe to predict that Arafat will not play a part in any *modus vivendi* that may emerge. What is needed in the Middle East is less rhetoric and a demonstrated willingness on both sides to explore options in good faith. The United States can play a useful role because, for once, our policy, though to date not conspicuously successful, does us credit. The U.S. commitment to Israel has never rested on economic self-interest or military considerations, though the ideology of the cold war has played a part. It should continue to be basically a moral commitment, broadly based, bipartisan. The temptation to make it an issue, up for political grabs, or any other advantage, must be avoided at all costs. Thus the remarks of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. George S. Brown, following a speech at Durham, N.C., cast doubt on his fitness to continue in that office. Less flagrant, but also objectionable, is Senator Jackson's haranguing of the demonstrators at the U.N. We cannot control others, but on the American side, everybody should lower his voice and work for the co-existence which, in the Middle East, is the only alternative to holocaust.

'Negative Neutrality'

"Bold new initiatives" in foreign policy, particularly of the anti-Communist variety favored by the late John Foster Dulles, are easier to set in motion than they are to reverse once their foolishness has been abundantly demonstrated. In 1960, a year after Castro took power, the United States decided to cut off sugar imports from Cuba and in 1964 pressured the OAS into adopting a general trade and diplomatic boycott. Now a decade later, at the recently adjourned Quito meeting, Secretary of State Kissinger coyly evaded "the new dialogue" he had promised our Latin American neighbors by not attending the conference and by instructing the U.S. delegation to maintain an attitude of "strict neutrality" or nonintervention. To a majority of the Latin American nations this represented the essence of hypocrisy and a cop-out as well. They had come to Quito believing that present U.S. policy favors a lifting of the economic embargo, which is the only condition Castro has attached to normalization of relations.

A recent report from the prestigious Commission on U.S.-Latin American Relations, headed by Sol Linowitz, recommended an end to Cuba's isolation and probably was designed to signal a shift in State Department policy. But the clever Dr. Kissinger did not want to appear to advocate a reversal of policy for fear of antagonizing Goldwater conservatives and resident Cuban refugees.

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THE
NATION

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No. 18

So we abstained. And the effect of our "nonintervention" was to encourage Bolivia, Brazil, Guatemala, Haiti and Nicaragua to abstain, so that the fourteen votes needed for a two-thirds majority could not be obtained.

This result, ironically, was a significant victory for Cuba, for the OAS is now sharply divided and has lost, at least for the time being, whatever prestige it still enjoyed. The twelve nations that voted to end the embargo will now probably normalize their own relations with Cuba. More important, resumption of relations between the United States and Cuba will be delayed, which probably was Washington's "secret" objective at Quito.

The disgruntlement of the majority at the conference is thoroughly understandable. They castigated the two-thirds rule as an absurdity, which it is. And, as the minister of Costa Rica said, the "negative neutrality" stance was inexplicable "when [the United States] has intervened publicly on many occasions in the past." For twenty years these nations heard Washington issue *pronunciamentos* and proclamations denouncing the wicked regime in Peking; then, of a sudden and in secrecy, it reversed its position, leaving its allies stunned by the swiftness with which a major policy was unilaterally abandoned. Carlos Lleras Restrepo, former President of Colombia and a good friend of this country, had this to say to Joseph Novitski of *The Washington Post*: "The U.S. changes its diplomatic position strictly in accordance with its own interests. . . . Intervention is bad in any event. It is not the U.S. role to decide the fate of individual countries. But it has, and the result has been that the U.S. winds up supporting right-wing dictatorships in the name of anti-communism. These regimes are repressive of human rights and that gives the U.S. a very bad image."

The vote at Quito has exposed a major shortcoming of Kissinger's diplomacy: his preoccupation with "clever" tactics and his disinclination to base foreign policy on accepted American political values. Since the Cuban embargo has failed, we should have acknowledged the fact and urged that it be lifted. But even Kissinger hesitates to be charged with being "soft on communism," and so we backed away from an opportunity to build up our depleted store of good will in Latin America.

Imprisonment Without Trial

Arrest in the night and imprisonment without trial have become as important an issue in Northern Ireland politics as partition, religion or the British Government's insistence that governmental power be shared by Catholics and Protestants. The Catholics, at least those who are suspected of being guilty of terrorist activities, are the main targets for internment. At present there are more than 500 Catholics in the internment camps; the number of Protestant terrorists held is less than fifty. Yet Long Kesh, the main internment camp, near Belfast, has been the scene of some quite extraordinary joint Protestant-Catholic protests.

Early in October a number of women whose husbands and sons were among the internees, broke down the outer defenses of Long Kesh, surged into the compound and burned several buildings. The prisoners had been

refusing food which, they said, was no better than hog swill and tossing it over the compound wire. In retaliation, the governor of Long Kesh banned all food parcels from outside and suspended visiting privileges. But the protest of the women seems to have been effective. The governor has promised an investigation into the quality of the food, and the general conditions in the camp.

Summer and winter, the prisoners are held in large huts made of corrugated iron sheeting, the sort of buildings that the defense forces use elsewhere for storing supplies. These unsatisfactory conditions have had the strange effect of bringing Catholics and Protestants together, not only within Long Kesh but outside in the wider world of politics and religion. Ian Paisley, the Protestant leader, will now denounce internment in words similar to those used by the Most Rev. Dr. Edward Daly, Roman Catholic Bishop of Derry. One suspects, however, that if the Protestant terrorists were to be released and the Catholics were still held, Paisley would change his tune.

Dr. Daly's point is that internment should be ended because it breeds resentment among the younger Catholics and encourages recruitment to the Provisional IRA. He is undoubtedly right. Sean MacStiophain, former chief of staff of the Provisional IRA, admitted in a recent television interview that when internment began, under the government of Brian Faulkner in August 1972, innumerable new recruits poured in.

The British Government and the British Army, now solely responsible for the administration and security of Northern Ireland, insist that internment is the only way to contain terror and restrain criminals who cannot be brought before the courts, either because witnesses would be in danger of their lives or because the police cannot get enough evidence to sustain a case. Merlyn Rees, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, has said that among the internees are Republican and Protestant terrorists whom the authorities believe have been guilty of murdering, on the one hand, members of the security forces and, on the other, defenseless Catholic workmen.

Despite all this the defenders of civil rights in Northern Ireland believe that internment in itself is a violation of democracy and politically immoral. They insist that Long Kesh be closed and suspected offenders brought before a regular court of law.

ANDREW BOYD

Toby Moffett, Nadercrat

Although the recession is part of an international capitalist dilemma [see David Deitch's "The Managed Depression"; *The Nation*, August 31] which cannot possibly be resolved simply by consumer action, nonetheless, in a time of rampant inflation there is no one so popular as a consumer advocate. Anthony J. "Toby" Moffett, Congressman-elect from Connecticut's 6th District, is the first former Nader associate to have run for public office. As a former director of the Nader-sponsored Connecticut Citizens Action Group (CCAG), Moffett has impeccable consumer advocate credentials. His widespread and favorable CCAG public image was the single most important factor in his election. On November 5 he beat a lackluster Republican by 53,000 votes, taking more than 62

per cent of the popular vote to win the seat vacated by Governor-elect Ella T. Grasso.

In transit from Nader Raider to public servant Moffett handled lightly the question of a possible conflict of loyalty. During the campaign he stated: "I've always worked for the goals which the Democratic Party represents"—an uncomfortable thought for either Nader or the Democratic Party. Can a nonpartisan consumer advocate become a partisan political consumer advocate without sacrificing either party or consumer interests? More important, if public officials begin openly to espouse Nader's methods and goals, then Nader's strictly nonpartisan status may be eroded.

Some of the now more than fifty former full-time Nader associates "can do what Toby has done," according to Ted Jacobs, director of the Nader-run Center for the Study of Responsive Law. Jacobs notes that "some have already indicated that they are returning to their home states." While this does not necessarily mean that they will enter electoral politics, it does point in that direction.

BILL SOLOMON

Oregon: A Victory of Sorts

For the first time in Oregon history a Democrat was elected from the 1st Congressional District. The victory of liberal state legislator Les AuCoin over Diarmuid O'Scannlain, a former leader of the Young Americans for Freedom, heralded a Democratic sweep which was marred by only two substantial setbacks: the defeat of state Sen. Betty Roberts by incumbent U.S. Sen. Robert Packwood and the unexpected defeat of state House Speaker Richard Eymann by a newcomer who vociferously opposed gun control.

The entire four-man delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives will be Democrats, including James Weaver, a strong supporter of a liberal national health plan, who upset veteran John Dellenback, the GOP Congressman and champion of the AMA.

Bob Straub, best known as a conservationist, was easily elected Governor, rolling over state Sen. Victor Atiyeh, whose voting record on labor and consumer issues was one of the worst in the Oregon legislature. In the state legislature the Democrats took strong command of both branches; they will come into the next session with a 23-to-7 line-up in the Senate and a 38-to-22 margin in the House, both far better than the last legislature make-up.

On ballot measures, which reflect more of voter thinking than does candidate preference, the majority of voting Oregonians (the turnout was as light here as it was nationally) came down hard where their pocketbooks were concerned, turned against the salmon packers by making the steelhead a sports fish and not to be sold by commercial fishermen, overwhelmingly passed a conflict of interest measure, shot down a measure which would permit state employees to serve in the legislature, endorsed a proposal which raises from \$20 to \$200 the minimum amount that will allow a jury trial in civil cases and, by a vote of 374,000 to 335,000, approved an "Obscenity and Sexual Conduct" measure that was opposed by all academic, librarian and civil liberties groups.

A Portland proposal to purchase the local facilities of Pacific Power & Light went down to a 4-to-1 defeat, the result of an exorbitant spending campaign (estimated at \$100,000) by private utilities and the hotly disputed statements of the Bonneville Power Administration. But Howard Willits, president of the Consumers Power League, said the group would carry on and that voters would start seeing the light after their rates were increased.

A study of Oregon election returns makes it clear that, while the people are deeply troubled by inflation and unemployment, there remain overriding issues that may be seized upon in the future by right-wing opportunists as gimmicks upon which to build a political base.

Any candidate who opposed the so-called "Pornography" measure was marked for defeat, even though he may have shown strong concern on matters involving the economy. And sensitive, compassionate Richard Eymann, who figured to continue as Speaker, was victimized by a late campaign charge that he endorsed gun control. So, down in Lane County, the freedom to keep guns without registering them was more important to a majority of those who voted than what happened to their income, jobs and the environment.

After the smoke of victory cleared, liberals started asking: what did we really win? Few critical issues were really explored—which may explain the large numbers of nonvoters and the sharp increase in votes gained by write-in candidates of leftist parties.

Maybe, in a sense, 1974 was the second to the last hurrah for voters plugged into the two-party system in Oregon (and probably in other places). The last hurrah could come in 1976. After that, after one more bout with opportunism, American politics may never be the same again.

RALPH FRIEDMAN

Saxbe Catches Up

On November 15, Attorney General Saxbe's office announced that an investigation into the FBI's past illegal surveillance of citizens' groups would shortly be made public. For some ten years (1961-71), the Bureau under J. Edgar Hoover conducted extensive counterintelligence programs ("Cointelpro") against organizations ranging from the Communist Party and the Black Panthers to Martin Luther King's SCLC and the Unitarian Society. No group on whom the Director frowned was spared. Thus, the Saxbe announcement was a hopeful sign.

But nothing that came forth should have surprised our readers; our special issue of June 1 ("Hoover's Legacy," by Frank J. Donner) covered the subject more thoroughly and in greater detail. The Saxbe report was less a disclosure than an official acknowledgment, and one is left to wonder whether it would have been made at all had we not spread the entire history before the public.

Can we trust at least that this sort of activity, having been exposed, will once and for all be terminated? Not exactly. Mr. Saxbe admitted in an interview that such a program could be reinstituted in the future, though "not while I'm here." The American Inquisition truly has nine lives, and *The Nation* is prepared, though hardly eager, to report on its next incarnation.

AGAINST THE TIDE OF TORTURE

ROBERT KAREN

In the winter of 1945 in Northern Italy, the Gestapo picked up a young Italian resistance worker and tortured her for forty-five days. Convinced that giving them information of any kind would make her immediately dispensable, she never talked and in the end was made to type her own death sentence. Had she died, her story would have held no great significance—fully 100,000 people lost their lives in the resistance movement in Italy during the last year and a half of the war, many of them in the furious final months when the Gestapo and the Italian secret police were mopping up potential witnesses to their crimes.

However, on the day she was to be executed, two men in Gestapo uniforms took her away for some "final questioning." Inexplicably, they left her at a hospital and in two years she was fully recovered.

Today, almost thirty years later, Ginetta Sagan has become one of the major organizers for Amnesty International, the London-based group which "adopts" and fights for the release of political prisoners the world over. Founded in 1961 by a British lawyer, Peter Benenson, Amnesty has 38,000 members in thirty-two countries and claims responsibility for the release of more than 10,000 political prisoners.

Ms. Sagan became involved with Amnesty International in 1967, when the Greek junta took power; it was the first time since the war that repression and torture again touched her life. "I had a lot of friends who were in jail because so many of them had studied in France when I was there. My former professor there had just met Christos Sartzetakis, who is the judge portrayed in the movie *Z*. They were sending me file after file of prisoners and horrible, horrible stories of torture. I remember one in particular, the dean of a university who was 80 years old and given the *falanga*—tying a person to a table and beating the soles of the feet until they are swollen. So painful, dreadfully painful."

In 1971 Sagan prevailed upon Melina Mercouri and Joan Baez to come to Berkeley for a concert to benefit the Greek relief fund. A crowd of 10,000 attended and Sagan has since proved that direct action to salvage individual lives can generate the kind of personal commitment that seemed to have faded with the anti-war movement. In the three years since that first Berkeley concert, Amnesty's West Coast membership (concentrated in California and Texas) has shot up from fifty-two to almost 5,000.

The press, which has generally been responsive to Amnesty's well-researched and highly respected reports, has also shown interest in the group's fast-growing West

Coast chapter. According to Sagan, "The news media gave us the needed push."

The enthusiasm for Amnesty suggests that its non-ideological campaign for individual freedoms touches the sensitivities of those who may be fed up with advocacy politics or cynical about the promise of any political system. Like medics in wartime, Amnesty members struggle to keep down the casualties of every state's drive for internal control.

Sagan, a quiet woman with a shy laugh and warm eyes, speaks only hesitantly of her wartime experiences. Nonetheless she has proved an able fund raiser for the fight against the brutality of which she was once a victim. In the words of Amnesty's former U.S. director, Amy Augustus, she has pulled in "inordinate amounts of money," including a \$25,000 matching grant from former McGovern finance chairman Max Palevsky—a contribution which was successfully matched through direct mail solicitations.

Today the San Francisco office at 3618 Sacramento Street has four full-time staff members, including Sagan and Kit Bricca, formerly with the Farm Workers. The region now accounts for about half of Amnesty's 100 U.S. groups, and the leadership understandably believes that similar organizing elsewhere in the country would produce comparable results. Last month Amnesty hired Joel Carlson, a South African civil rights lawyer who was forced to leave his country in 1971, to be full-time national coordinator, an investment which it hopes will lead to the creation of regional offices in Chicago, Denver, Atlanta and some place in Texas.

All this activity for human rights would be a cause for celebration were it not for the historical events which have helped to generate it. In the short time since Ginetta Sagan began organizing for Amnesty, there has been a marked increase in political repression and a severe upswing in the use of torture. In the last few months, Amnesty papers on Chile and North Korea and a worldwide survey called *Report on Torture* have revealed that not only is freedom of speech and association endangered by state action but torture, remarkably similar to the kind which the Gestapo practiced in Italy and throughout occupied Europe, seems to be spreading in epidemic proportions across the continents.

"When talking with the victims of torture today, I have a sense of *déjà vu*," says Sagan. "The same thing—interrogation, beating, fear, insult, degradation. They really want to destroy you as a human being, to reduce you to the level of a groveling animal."

Sagan offers a telling example of how routine torture has become. "My husband [Dr. Leonard Sagan] is a physician. He went to Chile for the Federation of American Scientists and interviewed a doctor there who had been tortured. One day they attached the electrodes to this doctor's testicles. But before they turned the current on, the torturer looked at his watch and realized it was lunch-

Robert Karen was for the last two years press secretary to New York City Councilman Carter Burden. He is now a freelance writer.

time. He began to laugh and said, 'Let's have lunch first.' And so they detached the wires."

Nor is this an isolated aberration. The data which Amnesty has gathered over the past ten years on the detention policies of some sixty-two nations indicate that torture is a perennial form of political oppression and that fighting it requires the same steady energy which men have applied against the waves and the sands and the cold.

It would be impossible to enumerate all the torture methods now in use. Old stand-bys from near drowning and suffocation to pulling out the fingernails are still prominent, along with an array of subtler, more harrowing methods derived from a growing sophistication in psychology, technology and medicine. The *Report on Torture* enumerates modern developments. The omnipresent electric shock is probably the key contribution of advanced technology. Psychological and manipulative techniques, such as sensory deprivation, isolation, exhaustion, degradation and threats (of permanent injury, disease, economic retaliation, or harm to one's family) are more widely and sometimes more cleverly applied. Sagan relates that in Brazil and the Soviet Union the secret police have been known to torture people while showing slides of members of their families, creating an association of family with pain.

Perhaps the most important new weapons available to modern torture regimes are the scores of drugs which terrify and melt the will of their victims. None of these drugs can force anyone to reveal what he has the courage to withhold; most, if the victim survives, will have no lasting physiological effects, though the emotional damage is frequently severe and permanent; and virtually all have some legitimate medical use. But the fears of the victim, the threatening atmosphere and the extremely unpleasant physical sensations make these medicines a potent form of terror.

While a sadist is the most likely candidate for a career in interrogation, recent clinical tests seem to demonstrate that many people, normally indisposed to cruelty, will nonetheless administer pain if told to do so by someone in authority. That is a crucial point when one considers the scores of doctors and nurses—some of whom are presumably not sadists—who, in the ultimate perversion of their professional roles, show up at secret police villas to act as consultants and practitioners of the black mechanics of interrogation. "Torture could not take place without the cooperation of physicians," says Sagan. "It is the doctor who examines the prisoner before interrogation, it is the doctor who says how far they can go, it is the doctor who treats the victim of torture and who remains silent. In Brazil there were three physicians themselves participating in the torture of prisoners, including a woman gynecologist who specialized in the sexual torture of women."

During World War I Randolph Bourne observed that "War is the health of the state." Today international adventure for the sake of domestic therapy is a much more dangerous course, but it seems that repressive states have found in torture an adequate substitute. Their abundant technology and sadistic energy are turned *inward* and the



Ginetta Sagan

harmony once generated by an orgy of chauvinism is achieved instead through an orgy of terror, intimidation and submission.

It must be understood that torture is a very *inefficient* means of gathering information and for the most part is, not used for that purpose. That fact is reflected in the black humor of South Vietnamese interrogators, who have been heard to say, "If they're not guilty, torture them until they are!" Torture is a weapon, widely perceived as a proper response to domestic or colonial insurrection, and sometimes openly advocated by counter-insurgency strategists. All told, according to the Amnesty report, at least thirty nations use torture as an administrative routine and have given free rein to men and women who achieve personal gratification from the destruction of other human beings. These torture states share information, educate torture trainees from less developed police states, and have even produced films on the subject (one found in the secret police headquarters in Portugal was made in part to instruct prison doctors).

Unfortunately, many victims of torture, including Sagan, have been unwilling to discuss their ordeals. Torture victims are often deeply ashamed of what has been done to them and what they have been made to do. Many have lasting and often disastrous emotional disorders comparable to those of shell-shocked veterans. Others are crippled or have suffered brain damage. Those who gave information sometimes suffer excruciating guilt. "I wasn't able to talk about it for many years because of the humiliation and the degradation that they forced on me," says Sagan. "That is why I feel strongly that the Amnesty project of help to care for the victims of torture and to rehabilitate them psychologically is an urgent and crucial one. I wouldn't want anyone to go through years without being able to share, to talk, and to be assured that we are human beings still. It is hard for any person to think himself still human after they

strap you to a table, after they insult you, and after they force on you these unspeakable, *unspeakable*, unspeakable, unspeakable actions."

Sex, degradation and power form a special weave in the torturer's mentality. An obsession with excrement and urine and forcing prisoners to smear themselves is common. So is rape and demeaning sexual positions. According to Sagan, "They always go to the sex organ for torture immediately, as well as verbal abuse always related to sex." Some of them giggle like adolescents, others are very rigid. "But all of them—they could ejaculate only by having you tied and strapped naked to a table."

The table, the sadistic giggling, the crushing despair—it is an ugly picture of the ultimate symbols of state power.

What Amnesty offers the political prisoner and the victim of torture is the promise that his case will not be forgotten. Its basic organizational unit, the "group," is responsible for three prisoners of conscience—one from the Eastern bloc, one from the West, and one from a nonaligned nation. This careful policy of neutrality has been a key to Amnesty's success, and with political oppression so widespread, the meticulous nonpartisanship is unfortunately easy to maintain.

Letters on behalf of adopted prisoners are sent to the United Nations and other international bodies, to the press, and to the responsible government. Amnesty International sends observers to trials of those accused of political crimes and, when possible, visits prisons and interviews prisoners and ex-prisoners.

Its success is a testament to the power of public opinion. And yet, within and without the responsible state, public opinion is a difficult weapon to mobilize. "I can understand the fear," says Sagan. "Anything that threatens the *status quo* or the fragility of our day-to-day existence is better pushed back into the unconscious. It is much more comfortable to go on with our daily lives without worrying about the man in Czechoslovakia who has been picked up, who has lost his job, who is being held some place incommunicado. But the only way to break the power of the secret police is if enough people *speak up*."

Being a friend of enemies of the state is a role which tends to give one a jaundiced—some might say "accurate"—view of the behavior of governments in general. Says Amy Augustus, now Amnesty's representative at the U.N., "All systems, all governments are tainted. Anyone who fights in a war for any of them has got to be crazy." Of her three and a half years as an Amnesty leader she says, "It's not easy work, but I feel great hope. You just have to get the letters from the prisoners and their families to know how rewarding it is. If you save one guy, you've done a great thing in a lifetime."

The very personal quality of caring which Amnesty offers is evident in the title of a new quarterly magazine, *Matchbox*, which is being published by the West Coast office. The name derives from an incident during Sagan's imprisonment by the Gestapo. A few nights after she had been forced to watch a comrade tortured to death, one of her jailers began cursing her and then kicked open the door to her cell and threw in a loaf of bread. "I

was hungry, I wanted to eat, but at the same time the thought crossed my mind that perhaps it was poisoned. But when I picked it up and started eating, I chewed on something hard. It was a little matchbox. There were matches inside and a piece of paper saying: '*Coraggio. Lavoriamo per te.*' Take courage, we are working for you."

The spirit of the matchbox is now duplicated by the thousands in the letters which Amnesty members send to political prisoners. Despite an impersonal flatness typical of form letters, the sample "message to a prisoner" which the national office in New York provides to its local groups has a touching quality which cannot be lost on the isolated recipient:

Although you do not know me, I hope that this letter with its message of sympathy will have some meaning for you. I am dedicated to the idea of a world where men can be free to speak and worship as their conscience dictates. I am deeply saddened by the fate of men and women, like yourself, who are imprisoned for being faithful to their views, and my thoughts are with you in your ordeal. Indeed, there are people all over the world working for human rights who think of you, and hope for your early release.

Can it happen here? Amnesty does have thirty prisoners of conscience in the United States, most of them members of ethnic minorities who were caught in situations where racial and/or political prejudice was evident in the arrest, conviction or sentencing. It has also described numerous instances of police and prison brutality. But regarding torture, it has concluded: "It would be incorrect to suggest that there is an administrative practice of torture by the law-enforcement authorities of the United States within their own domestic jurisdiction."

Still, there is reason to be concerned about the U.S. position. As a major supplier of funds and hardware for foreign military and secret police, the country bears a responsibility for how these resources are used. Our government has never officially condemned the practice of torture in Brazil, although there is no disputing its prevalence, and there is a persistent suspicion, bluntly portrayed in the movie *State of Siege*, that the United States provides the training for many of Latin America's novice interrogators. To bring the issue even closer to home, there have been widespread reports, abundantly documented by the confessions of repentant GIs, of direct involvement of American troops in the torture of Vietnamese. If torture were to become a domestic reality here—in response, say, to some serious social upheaval—it would not be the first time in the history of a Western nation that the habit was brought home after having been practiced first on the "gooks."

It is the mentality of the torturer, however, which I find especially haunting. I've seen it in school-yard bullying, in high school "rank-out" sessions, in the pleasure that hoods derive from humiliating eggheads. Evidence now exists that among certain professional torturers a mumbo jumbo has grown up that is reminiscent of the fraternal rites of teen-age groups. From the Amnesty report:

In Brazil, it has been alleged that there now exists

a subculture of torture, with its own values, its apprenticeships, its initiation rites. It has even acquired its own language. The list of atrocities has been codified to sound like a cartoon show: "the parrot's swing," "the dragon chair." In the Operação Bandeirantes of São Paulo, an interrogation center once described as "an advanced school of torture," the entire ritual of torture is known as the "spiritual seance." . . . In the recent wave of torture in Greece, the torturers at the Bouboulina Street Asphalia headquarters went so far as to call themselves "doctors." The atmosphere surrounding

the torture operation seems to rely on this kind of perverted irony.

Unfortunately, those who have not experienced it tend to believe that torture is a faraway affair. A friend who is reading Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* remarked: "It is incredible when you think that these things were happening to people just like us. Ordinary people." It is the first-hand experience of torture which makes people like Ginetta Sagan unusual. Only they and the torturers know how close at hand it is. □

POLLSTERS AND PUNDITS

THE TRICKS OF THE TRADE

LEE BENSON, KEVIN CLANCY and JOHN KUSHMA

Public opinion polls have become an American growth industry. Sales managers, political candidates, newspaper and magazine editors, TV executives, among others, cry for them. And pay for them. What Americans think about an astonishing variety of subjects is now "scientifically studied" and the results used for an astonishing variety of purposes.

Voting polls, which attract the most public attention, are only a small fraction of the gross national product of the polling industry. Most commercial pollsters tend to use them to advertise their other services. They stimulate interest in polls generally and convince sales managers and advertising agencies that pollsters really can measure public opinion. But voting polls have numerous other users—and abusers. Such as political pundits.

Political punditry was, of course, practiced long before voting polls were invented, but pundits now depend upon them, in and out of election season, to lend authority to their opinions. Put another way, the increasing acceptance of scientific polling has led to the increasing use of voting polls by political pundits for nonscientific, *ideological* purposes.

Pollsters tell us how Americans will vote or have voted. Then riding piggyback atop their favorite pollster, pundits such as Scammon and Wattenberg, Eric Sevareid, Samuel Lubell, David Broder or Evans and Novak airily survey American voting behavior. Magisterially, they decipher its mysteries and instruct us in our duties.

Why will American voters do what they will do? Why have they done what they have done? What does it all mean? What must be done if the Republic is to be saved? The pundit knows.

How should intelligent citizens view the pox of pollsters and pundits who "study" voting behavior? With amusement. Why amusement? Read on.

We cannot be sure, but our reigning pundits do seem to have avoided overexposure to social science theory and methodology. ("Teddy" White may be their deep thinker.) Innocent of corruption by social scientists,

they take—or appear to take—electoral polls at face value. Few doubts inhibit them when they tell us "what the polls and elections show."

Contrary to what pundits would have us believe, polls show less than meet the eye. More precisely, electoral polls suffer from severe theoretical and methodological defects which can severely distort reality and create Alice-in-Wonderland worlds of nonexistent "social groups" and spurious correlations.

What can pollsters really do? Trivial things. Trivial, that is, from the standpoint of intelligent citizens who want to improve their understanding of American electoral processes and use that knowledge as a guide to effective action. Talented pollsters, using *final* polls taken very shortly before an election, can now accurately predict the outcome. Because final predictions can easily be checked against reality, polls that produce them get more tender loving care—and cash—than do polls that form the raw data for earlier estimates. Since earlier estimates (i.e., who is running how many points ahead of whom) can never be checked against reality, intelligent citizens should bear in mind that the accuracy of final predictions tells them little or nothing about the accuracy of estimates made earlier in election campaigns. Moreover, they should recognize that the selective and distorted release of "polls" taken during a campaign may significantly influence the outcome—and may be intended to do so. Self-fulfilling prophecies did not disappear with the demise of Assyrian soothsayers.

When one recalls the *Literary Digest's* "Alf Landon will win" forecast of 1936, the evolution of polling from gambling to science is nothing short of amazing. Pollsters deserve respect for having advanced the state of their craft during the past four decades, elevating polling to the high status which it now enjoys as a profession. On the other hand, a concerned public should not lose sight of the serious weaknesses of electoral polls. The *significance* of accurate election predictions, which do little to improve our understanding of voting behavior, is somewhat less than overwhelming. After all, the day after an

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election anyone is able to make accurate observations.

Our main point is this: the demonstrated ability of pollsters to *predict* an election outcome does not demonstrate the ability of pundits to do what pundits purport to do—*explain* an election outcome. To make our argument concrete, we concentrate on 1968; but the argument is applicable to any election year.

We rely on 1968 data and examples for three main reasons: (1) Scammon and Wattenberg, Broder, Kevin Phillips, Lubell, Levy and Kramer and other pundits have heavily depended on 1968 polls and sample precinct analyses to prescribe what we regard as political nostrums for activists and voters. (2) All the pundits cited above have written books focused on the 1968 Presidential election, a happy circumstance that facilitates our critique of their general procedures and claims. (3) We can combine the rich data found in two unusually comprehensive and detailed scholarly social surveys of the American population (National Opinion Research Center, 1972; 1973) to help us expose the flimsy, illusory character of the political punditry that purports to tell us what the 1968 election results, polls and sample precinct analyses “show.”

Of all electoral polls, the Gallup poll is the most venerable and professional. At specified intervals during an election campaign, Gallup releases the results of successive “trial heats” among a sample of about 1,500 adults “in 300 scientifically selected localities across the nation.” Gallup tends to eschew interpreting the results of successive trial heats; he appears merely to give “the facts.” His good intentions notwithstanding, his “facts” do interpret voting behavior.

If the Gallup poll merely presented the overall distribution of preferences by party or candidates, it might be said “just to give the facts.” But it does not do that. It *groups* voters according to a variety of attributes: religion, occupation, region, sex, race, etc. For example, its “Presidential trial heat” of July 11, 1968, showed that if the Democrats nominated Humphrey, the Republicans nominated Nixon, and a third party nominated Wallace, all respondents would vote as follows:

	%
Humphrey	40
Nixon	35
Wallace	16
Undecided	9

The Gallup tables did not stop there. They proceeded to show the preference of respondents grouped by different attributes.

	BY RELIGION			
	HHH %	RMN %	GW %	Undecided %
Protestants	36	40	17	7
Catholics	53	27	9	11
Jews	79	4	4	13

	BY OCCUPATION			
	HHH %	RMN %	GW %	Undecided %
Prof. & Bus.	42	42	8	8
Clerical & Sales	43	37	12	8

Farmers	30	44	20	6
Manual Wkrs.	45	29	17	9

In similar fashion, other tables showed the distribution of partisan preferences when respondents were grouped according to a variety of other attributes that have come to be accepted as standard (e.g., race, region, party affiliation). But no tables were presented that grouped respondents according to color of eyes or length of nose.

Why didn't Gallup use physiognomic attributes to group respondents? The question is not frivolous. They were not used because the theories guiding the Gallup poll (and, to our knowledge, all other polls) assert, in effect, that such attributes cannot “truly” influence voting behavior. Even if preferences could be shown to differ considerably when respondents were grouped according to different physiognomic attributes, analysts would dismiss the apparent relationships as spurious correlations. Their theories tell them that physiognomic attributes cannot possibly influence voting behavior. Apparent relationships between eye color and preference for Humphrey, for example, would be *casual*, not *causal*.

It should be clear from this hypothetical example that when Gallup (or any pollster) groups respondents by any attribute he makes the assumption that the specified attribute forms the basis of a social group whose members' voting behavior might differ significantly from the voting behavior of members of other social groups.

The religious table stimulates readers to infer that “membership” in different religious groups *caused* the different voting preferences assigned to the Jewish, Catholic and Protestant respondents. Similarly, the table that shows the different responses of “farmers” and “manual workers” to Humphrey and Nixon inclines readers to infer that “membership” in those different occupational groups caused those different responses. Painters use ingenious optical effects to fool the eye. Pollsters can use simple tables to produce similar illusory effects.

The technical term for the method used to create Gallup's tables is *bivariate analysis*. That is, at any one time it considers only the relationships between two variables. Bivariate analyses appear to answer this question: what is the influence of one thing, such as religion, upon some other thing, such as voting preference?

Although they theoretically may know better, pollsters who use bivariate analysis must treat individuals as though they had only *one* attribute that might influence their voting behavior. They can assign the same individual to different groups based upon different attributes, but they cannot do more than consider the possible effect on voting behavior of one attribute at a time.

For example, Gallup presented separate tables of voting by religion and by occupation. But he presented no table that considered the simultaneous effects of religion *and* occupation. Did Protestant *manual workers* prefer Humphrey much more strongly than did Protestant *farmers*? Such questions can be ignored only at the risk of marvelously distorting reality. Relationships can then be presented as “facts,” when in fact they may be merely artifacts of pollsters' theoretical and methodological errors.

Bivariate voting analyses cannot be trusted—there is far less to them than meets the eye. We need not cata-

logue here the glorious profusion of theoretical and methodological errors that practitioners of bivariate voting analyses can and do commit. For our purposes, we need only discuss one main type of error characteristically committed by pollsters and pundits. It occurs when analysts treat some mere statistical aggregate or demographic category that they have identified or created, as though it constituted a real social group. A concrete example again best makes the point.

According to Gallup's tables that grouped respondents by religion, striking differences existed in the 1968 partisan preferences expressed by Protestants, Catholics and Jews. But when we consider the variety of denominations gathered under the inclusive Protestant rubric, it hardly seems reasonable to treat Protestants as though they constituted a religious group comparable to Catholics. To make that point concretely, we have combined data from the general social surveys conducted in 1972 and 1973 by the National Opinion Research Center. The table below shows the 1968 vote cast for Nixon by Catholic respondents, by Protestants who identified themselves with five denominations, and by all other Protestants.

	Nixon %
Presbyterian	69
Episcopalian	69
Lutheran	58
Methodist	58
Other Protestant	53
Catholic	43
Baptist	36

As that table suggests, when Protestants are identified according to denomination, they vary widely in their voting behavior—from 69 per cent for Nixon to 36 per cent for Nixon.

To analyze voting behavior according to Protestant denomination, however, is merely to engage in a form of bivariate analysis that uses more realistic religious groups than those Gallup and other pollsters employ. What happens if we use multivariate analysis to examine the *combined* effect of religious and ethnic attributes on voting behavior? The table below shows the Nixon vote cast by different kinds of Methodists.

	Nixon %
German Methodists	74
English "	69
Other "	50
Irish "	48
Black "	17

In similar fashion, if the available data permitted us to do so legitimately, we could go further and consider the effect of other attributes that theoretically can be assumed to influence voting behavior. For example, did significant voting differences exist in 1968 among Methodists who had the same ethnic background, but who differed in economic levels? And did differences in region, community size, education or age significantly affect the voting behavior of individuals who possessed similar religious, ethnic, and economic attributes? Such questions leap to mind once we free ourselves from single-attribute determinism and bivariate analysis. We can ask them, but we cannot at present legitimately answer them.

As polls and surveys have been designed and taken to date, their sample size is much too small to permit dividing the American electorate into social groups identified by *clusters* of theoretically relevant attributes. We cannot, therefore, responsibly identify and explain change and stability in American voting behavior.

In recent years, it is probably reasonable to think, Jews and blacks have strongly tended to vote *en bloc*. But in relative terms, they are small, atypical social groups. Therefore, the ability to identify and credibly explain their voting behavior in no way proves that we can identify and credibly explain the behavior of the American electorate. We cannot because, among many other things, to do so would require us to make credible estimates of the impact of the appeals to Jewish and black voters on all, or most other, social groups. And we cannot now do that.

It surely is conceivable that partisan strategies designed to hold or increase Jewish and/or black support may boomerang and cause heavy losses among other social groups. Have such strategies had that effect? We do not know. No one *can* know, given the present state of polling and survey research. To pretend otherwise is to stigmatize oneself as a pseudo-pundit masquerading in pseudo-scientific drag.

Thus, defective theories and methods force pollsters to create "groups" which may not exist in real life. Indeed, they tend to exist mainly in the imaginary worlds conjured up by blithe spirits who rely on small samples to analyze voting behavior in the most heterogeneous society and fragmented electoral system on earth. Having shown that the pollsters offer less than their tables suggest, we turn to the pundits who ride piggyback on them. Space restricts us to a few representative, concrete examples.

First, Richard Scammon and Ben Wattenberg. As they characterize their book, *The Real Majority*, it constituted "an exercise in psephology—that is, the study of elections. Somewhat more specifically, the book dealt in depth with *Presidential psephology*." Published in 1970, it looked backward to the 1968 election in order to look forward to the 1972 election. In an epilogue for a paperback edition, written after the 1970 elections, they examined their work, found it good, and modestly observed that it had become the "bible" for both major political parties in the 1970 campaigns.

Scammon and Wattenberg's book—and 1971 epilogue—preached an ideological sermon based on this text: Wise politicians must disregard the noisy agitation, fierce disorders, sensational rhetoric of the late 1960s. They changed nothing. The old parties will abide forever and with little change.

The nation's basic politics have not changed. The 1970 elections show the powerful theme of stability and continuity in the ongoing American political process. After all the talk about the breakup of the two-party system, about the new politics, about emerging Republican majorities and the disintegration of the FDR coalition, a look at the election data is positively startling as the familiar patterns reemerge.

To suggest the flavor of Scammon and Wattenberg's political nostrum, we quote their strong approval of the

strategies and tactics they claimed that [Democratic] liberals had followed in 1970 when they repudiated their former leftist "radic-lib" line.

In the language of our book, *they* [Democratic Liberals] moved to the attitudinal center [original emphasis] and talked directly to the real majority of Americans [emphasis added], demographically categorized mostly as unyoung, unpoor, unblack, middle-aged, middle-class, and middle-minded.

If we have shown that pollsters and pundits use bivariate analyses to practice their version of *trompe l'oeil*, readers will see that "the real majority" is nothing but a conjurer's trick. The "real majority" touted by Scammon and Wattenberg is an abstract statistical aggregate created to fool people into accepting their political myth. It is not a real social group that anyone has ever observed. It cannot influence election outcomes because it does not exist.

True, there are middle-aged individuals. But there is no known middle-aged social group that is "middle-minded" and votes cohesively. A concrete example exposes the Scammon-Wattenberg illusion.

As we noted above, according to the NORC data on 1968 voting, 69 per cent of the Presbyterians voted for Nixon, as compared to 36 per cent of the Baptists; 74 per cent of the German Methodists voted for Nixon, as compared to 48 per cent of the Irish Methodists. Do middle-aged Presbyterians, Baptists, German Methodists, Irish Methodists, vote alike? No one now knows. No one can now possibly know. Well then, is there any reason to believe that the middle-aged members of those four groups actually do vote alike? No.

Middle-age is a demographic attribute. In the United States, it abstractly groups individuals who possess remarkably different clusters of other attributes—clusters or configurations of attributes that (probably) reflect their membership in a remarkable variety of social groups that think differently and vote differently.

One can better understand why Scammon and Wattenberg created an unreal "real majority" by recognizing that their studious exercise in psephology is better characterized as a political tract to win converts for their centrist party line. Granting their right to advocate a centrist party line, we condemn their use of pseudo-scientific tricks to support that line.

According to the Scammon-Wattenberg gospel, little has changed in American politics and little will change. Things are what they used to be. Wise politicians will take Edmund Burke as their philosopher. For change to come, it must come slowly. That's what the "election data" show when "studied" by psephologists. Let us look, therefore, at the "positively startling" election data Scammon and Wattenberg cited in 1971 to support their claims that, despite noisy but ineffectual "radic-lib" rhetoric, stability and continuity continue to dominate the American political process. We quote in its entirety the one paragraph they wrote to show the "positively startling" election data "revealed" by the 1970 elections.

The Democrats got 54% of the [1970] vote—compared to 51% in the last Congressional election [1968]. Labor went Democratic. The Chamber of Commerce types went Republican. Blacks, Jews and Chicanos went

Democratic. The majority of high-income voters, WASPs and suburbanites went Republican. What else is new?

That paragraph is balderdash. The only "election data" it cites are the national Democratic percentages of votes for Congress in 1968 and 1970.

"Labor went Democratic." "WASPs went Republican." What do such empty phrases mean? What does "went" mean? Fifty-one per cent Democratic or 99 per cent Democratic? Did a "group" go much more Republican or much less Republican than it normally "went"? What are WASPs? A real social group, or an ambiguous term for a statistical aggregate that exists nowhere except in the minds of pundits of the Scammon-Wattenberg class?

The paragraph quoted above is a typical product of bivariate analysis—a mishmash of unsupported claims that, for the most part, are intrinsically unsupportable. Responsible analysts might perhaps make the type of claim so casually tossed off by Scammon and Wattenberg after undertaking multivariate analyses of richly detailed data for the 1970 and earlier elections. But no one has ever collected such data.

However, some data available from the 1972 and 1973 NORC social surveys suggest that more things exist in the American political universe than are dreamed of by the likes of Scammon-Wattenberg. Consider WASPs. More precisely, consider some groups indisputably designated by that snide term. (Has anyone ever seen a non-white Anglo-Saxon Protestant? And need it be said that corruption of language reveals—and causes—corruption of thought?)

It may come as a shock to pollsters and pundits, but Catholics constitute only a minority of "the Irish" in America. (The combined 1972 and 1973 surveys identify only 113 Catholics out of 259 Irish who acknowledge some religious denomination.) Protestant Irish, who may well think of themselves as Celts, nevertheless surely fall within the ill-defined boundaries of the WASPs. Are they as Republican as the Scammon-Wattenberg "bible" makes them out to be? The table below shows the party identifications of the four denominations of Irish Protestants for whom there are sufficient "cases" to warrant our using them. ("Other Protestants" are not a denomination, but we use them here legitimately.)

	<u>%</u>	<u>Baptist</u>	<u>Methodist</u>	<u>Presbyterian</u>	<u>Other Protestants</u>
Dem.		44	48	39	46
Ind.		33	21	23	33
Rep.		24	31	39	22

With party feeling like that among friendly WASPs, why do Republicans need non-WASP enemies?

Look now at the party identifications of five denominations of German WASPs:

<u>%</u>	<u>Baptist</u>	<u>Methodist</u>	<u>Lutheran</u>	<u>Presbyterian</u>	<u>Episcopalian</u>
Dem.	44	33	30	23	25
Ind.	28	23	30	23	50
Rep.	28	44	40	54	25

Finally, the party identifications of the same five denominations of English WASPs:

%	Baptist	Methodist	Lutheran	Presbyterian	Episcopalian
Dem.	42	35	28	20	14
Ind.	29	27	20	31	50
Rep.	32	38	52	49	36

One thing those tables show is the absurdity of treating a poorly delineated *demographic* group, "WASPs," as though it were a real social group. Ethno-religious groups included under that extraordinarily heterogeneous rubric differed widely in their party identification. Another thing they show is the absurdity of the Scammon-Wattenberg assumption ("What else is new?") that WASPs support the Republican Party much more strongly than they do the Democratic Party.

The tables do not *show*, but they do *suggest* something else. They suggest that, contrary to the general Scammon-Wattenberg no-change line, some WASP groups have been moving. From tending to support Republicans they now may be tending to support Democrats. We say the tables *suggest* that observation because, to our knowledge, no comparable data exist for earlier years.

What we do know is that Scammon and Wattenberg had no basis for their confident claims about the continued stability of *WASP* voting behavior. More generally, we know that Scammon and Wattenberg had no basis for their confident claims about *American* voting behavior. We think it reasonable to advise our readers, therefore, to regard *The Real Majority* not as a studious "exercise in psephology" but as an ideological tract.

Mark R. Levy and Michael S. Kramer provide the second example of the absurdities of punditry. Their book, misleadingly titled, *The Ethnic Factor: How American Minorities Decide Elections*, breathlessly discovered that ethnicity does significantly influence American voting behavior—a discovery that perhaps will not totally surprise considerable numbers of historians who have been documenting that thesis for two decades. (Lee Benson's first formal paper on the subject, for example, was given at a session of the American Historical Association's annual convention in 1954.)

Levy and Kramer do not really discuss ethnicity, they discuss what they call "six ethnic groups." One indication of their mastery of the complex material they deal with is that they did not hesitate to merge Chicanos and Puerto Ricans into one "ethnic group." Another indication is that they equate "Irish" with "Catholic," as in the following example: "It appears that Kennedy appealed to the Irish for two very different reasons. For the blue-collar Irish, Kennedy's economic liberalism and Roman Catholicism combined to make him a highly attractive candidate."

As we have previously noted, Catholics actually constitute only a minority of "Irish Americans." Had Levy and Kramer known that, they would not have had to exercise quite as much ingenuity as they did to explain why the Irish were the least "unified" of the ethnic groups they discussed. So un-bloclike, in fact, did Levy and Kramer find the Irish in polls and precinct analyses that their chapter is titled "The Irish: Unethnic." They attribute this lack of unity to the fact that "the first major waves of Irish immigrants arrived in the United States in the 1820s." That "fact" will surprise historians, who have

been under the impression that five major waves of Scotch-Irish migrated to the American colonies between 1714 and the Revolution, and that their remarkable fecundity made them a major component of the American population before Irish Catholics came over in significant numbers.

Levy and Kramer simply do not know what they are talking about when they discuss American ethnic groups. Like their fellow pundits, however, they are eager to prescribe what must be done if the Republic is to be saved. "The American ethnics" must use their "clout":

In a nation which responds first to the language of the ballot, the American ethnics have been sadly unaware of their potential political power. For many reasons, only one being a long-perceived history of repression, the blacks are showing the way to effective minority use of political muscle. The next few years will witness a continued political activity on their part. The years following—or, hopefully, the same years—must see the other ethnics (Northern city-bound blacks included), take the cue and begin the climb to political power.

Consider that prescription in the light of the actual relationships among the "six ethnic groups" discussed by Levy-Kramer: blacks, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, Jews, Irish, Slavs, Italians. Consider what is happening in Boston today. Should we laugh—or cry?

Rowland Evans and Robert Novak are the final example we offer of pundits at work. To lend an air of verisimilitude to their widely syndicated column, they go out in the field and "scientifically" interview voters in sample precincts. Apparently they tag along with some polling organization working for a client and conduct interviews with its sample of respondents. Unlike professional interviewers who work in their own communities, Evans-Novak travel far, wide and fast. This year, in states including California, Colorado, South Dakota and Ohio, their interviews have been "conducted with Pat Caddell's Cambridge Survey Research organization."

As interviewers, Evans-Novak are astonishingly productive. A recent column "on our interviews in two silent-majority precincts in the San Fernando Valley" reported results for "seventy-one registered voters interviewed." How much time did they spend with each respondent? Did anyone connected with Cambridge Survey Research tell Evans-Novak about the multitudinous problems of interviewer-respondent bias that bedevil the most experienced, neutral interviewer—even when he or she has no column deadline to meet? Did anyone suggest to them that celebrity columnists who appear on television programs, regularly have their pictures in the paper, and report their "findings" in newspapers coast to coast, may not be ideal interviewers?

To appreciate that Evans-Novak "reports" from the field represent something less than the results of scientific opinion polls, one need only read their columns. When "far-out leftists" are targets, their columns overflow with invective; when men of the Center are wise politicians in action, they drip with honey. Evans-Novak appear to be as well qualified to interview voters on current American politics and politicians and then report their views as the Grand Inquisitor would have been to interview

scientists on the merits of Galileo's theory of the solar system.

To support our argument that Evans-Novak use the tag-along-with-scientific-pollster ploy to peddle the same centrist line advocated by Scammon-Wattenberg, we quote from a recent column datelined Columbus, Ohio. On the basis of John Glenn's alleged "phenomenal" showing in his campaign for the U.S. Senate, they touted the ex-astronaut as likely to become "a major factor in the [Democratic] Party's 1976 Presidential battle." In typical inside-dopester fashion, they cited unnamed polls and quoted anonymous sources to support the following hodge-podge of claims:

The Glenn phenomenon is unique in the post-Watergate politics of mass voter disillusionment: A national hero, unencumbered with the ideological baggage that has fragmented the Democratic Party, who seems eminently acceptable to blue-collar hard hats and left-of-center intellectuals. Glenn's *personal constituency* [emphasis added] today ranges from deep right-center to left-center, a broad spectrum the Democratic Party badly needs in the embittered search for its soul.

We best convey the Evans-Novak style and line when we note that the same column used similar inside-dopester devices to smear and put down John J. Gilligan, the Governor of Ohio who was running for re-election. Compared to the phenomenal, centrist Glenn, the "Left-liberal" Gilligan, they emphasized, was doing quite badly. If their accounts of Glenn's bright prospects and Gilligan's gloomy prospects were borne out in November—accounts obviously calculated to function as self-fulfilling prophecies—then:

The result would be a strong indication that the national [Democratic] Party should move to the center in 1976 and away from the left-liberal ideology of Gilligan.

... Glenn will use his predictable victory in Ohio as a case study for his party, so harassed and weakened by ever-widening ideological splits.

No such simplistic conclusion, of course, follows from the differences in the Ohio vote for Glenn and Gilligan. Observers agree that numerous factors induced Ohio voters to split their tickets, among them Gilligan's responsibility for the imposition of the state's first income tax, his abrasive personality, the varying effectiveness of the campaigns run by the Republican candidates for Senator and Governor.

Ticket-splitting was evident throughout the country in the 1974 elections. Thus the Ohio results cannot legitimately be interpreted to show a national trend favoring Democratic centrists and repudiating Democratic liberals. Unlike Ohio, for example, in Pennsylvania the liberal Democratic incumbent Governor, Milton Shapp, easily defeated his conservative Republican opponent and led his party to stronger control of the state legislature, while the moderate-to-liberal Republican incumbent Richard Schweiker defeated Pete Flaherty, his Democratic opponent for U.S. Senator, who took a nonideological stance and emphasized "fiscal conservatism."

The contrast between the election results in Ohio and Pennsylvania underscores our point: Evans-Novak selectively use polls and election data as propaganda for their centrist political ideology. Like Scammon-Wattenberg, they do not function as political observers who study polls and elections. They function as ideologues masquerading as political observers.

In our introduction, we suggested that intelligent citizens might best view pollsters and pundits, in general, with amusement. But they had better view particular pundits of the type represented by Evans-Novak, Scammon-Wattenberg, Levy-Kramer with concern. □

ZAIRE: FISTICUFFS FOR MOBUTU

STEPHEN R. WEISSMAN

Why was the heavyweight championship fight held in Zaïre (the former Belgian Congo)? Generally speaking, the press has failed to uncover the true reasons for the Ali-Foreman "African homecoming," or to estimate its political significance for Zaïre, and for U.S. foreign policy as well.

Risnelia, the Panamanian company which provided \$10.45 million to guarantee the boxers' purses and underwrite the live gate, is entirely owned by the office of Zaïre President Mobutu Sese Seko. According to Risnelia's Swiss chairman, Raymond Nicolet, with whom I spoke in New York on October 10, the President's office will

receive 42.5 per cent of gross world receipts. Risnelia's funds, and additional moneys for the vast site preparations in Kinshasa, were drawn from various accounts of the National Bank of Zaïre upon orders from the President. Nicolet admits that he helped concoct the false press cover story, which described Risnelia as a consortium of Swiss investors in Zaïre, to conceal Mobutu's true role. Why such secrecy? One reason, says a long-time political adviser to Mobutu whose information about the regime has always proved reliable, is that the President feared the Zaïrian people might not approve spending up to 3 per cent of the national budget on the match. Indeed to this day, their newspapers have not reported where all the money for the fight came from.

Another possible reason, suggests this high-ranking informant, is the potential for Presidential profit making in the fight arrangements. By establishing a foreign rather than a Zaïrian corporation to handle the match, and by putting it in the name of the President's office rather than the full government of Zaïre, Mobutu has achieved

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maximum personal control of the fight receipts. (Nicolet's only explanation of why Mobutu called upon him to set up a foreign corporation is that "he knew me" and "it could be done quickly.") Mobutu and his family have certainly not overlooked other opportunities to enrich themselves during his reign. Among their widely reported assets are the Bank of Kinshasa, the largest taxi company in Zaïre, a substantial chunk of the country's wholesale and retail trade and numerous foreign villas.

Politically, explains the aforementioned source, a primary reason for importing the fight was to "distract" rising social discontent in Kinshasa and other cities. As the "Quarterly Economic Review" of *The Economist* reported recently, last year's "Zairianization" of foreign plantations and commercial enterprises has produced "serious shortages" and spurred "rampant inflation." These firms were given to influential followers of Mobutu in an attempt to establish a capitalist middle class. However, the takeover was marked by such incompetence, short-term greed and poor organization that it had the effect of adding to the already extreme social inequality. Two professors just returned from several years of teaching at the University of Zaïre told me of increasingly visible hunger, banditry and public hangings in Kinshasa.

The political motive for the match was further indicated by the plan to have it occur at the same time as the "*Quinzaine de Mobutisme*," a two-week celebration of Mobutu's Thought encompassing public meetings, traditional dancing, and the opening of the school of Zaïre's single party. Said the Zaïrian newspaper *Taifa*, "The political sense of the Ali-Foreman fight is to give homage to President Mobutu."

Stimulating the volatility of the masses is the enormous social inequality that has grown up in the fourteen years since independence. This was exemplified by the prices of seats for the fight and for the poorly attended black music festival, which were beyond the reach of about 98 per cent of the people. While the fighters trained at the Presidential estate in N'sele with its villas for party dignitaries and the "second biggest swimming pool in the world," the average Zaïrian lives without running water, electricity or minimal health protection.

The spectacle was also designed, and this much was publicly acknowledged, to attract the attention of the regime's Western, especially American, supporters. About 10 per cent of the budget is foreign-financed, and U.S. private investment alone has increased tenfold in the last five years to \$200 million. In fact, both Nicolet and U.S. fight promoter Hank Schwartz suggest that the original idea of holding the fight in Kinshasa probably came from Mobutu's German-American international financial adviser, Frederick Weymar. Weymar is a leading co-defendant in the famous SEC Vesco case which involves an alleged scheme to loot Investors Overseas Services mutual funds of \$224 million. After breaking with Vesco in early 1973, he joined Mobutu, who needed someone to deal with German and other Western investors. What is Weymar getting out of all this? For one thing, he states through his lawyer, he is "an investor in the mineral resources of Zaïre."

If true, the information is hardly surprising since the

country has a reputation for attracting, and often enriching, independent foreign entrepreneurs. As one experienced observer of Zaïre remarked, "It's a perfect place for operators who want to get rich in one to five years. The top officials distrust the big colonial firms and their racial attitudes. They want to work with people who are small enough to be dependent and loyal, and they are willing to pay extra for this." One such "operator" is the Belgian journalist Pierre Davister, who has long supported and advised Mobutu: Davister now has his own magazine, *Spécial*, which is lavishly subsidized by the President. Another successful entrepreneur is Maurice Tempelman, a politically well-connected U.S. diamond trader who became friends with Mobutu in the early 1960s, helping him re-establish financial control over a rebellious diamond region. Tempelman later formed international consortia which took over the Belgian diamond marketing concession in that province and obtained new copper concessions in Shaba Province. He recently financed the "Mobutu Sese Seko Distinguished Lectures on Zaïre" at New York University, "to deepen and extend America's understanding of Zaïre's historic role in world affairs."

Finally, and this is indeed ironic, Muhammad Ali, the "champion of the people," a conscientious objector to the war in Vietnam, boosted the prestige of a leader who has been installed at least once and probably twice by the CIA. My own published research, based partly on interviews with a member of the U.S. Embassy in 1960 and two other knowledgeable U.S. officials, has established the political and financial role of CIA station chief Larry Devlin in the overthrow of the dubiously "pro-Communist" Lumumba government. Similar evidence, including statements in *La grande mystification du Congo-Kinshasa*, a book published in Paris by the overthrown Foreign Minister Cleophas Kamitatu, and my interviews with a U.S. business acquaintance and a diplomatic colleague of Devlin, point to his involvement in the 1965 "anti-Communist" military coup. Today, according to an authoritative Western diplomatic source, the CIA is in charge of Mobutu's personal bodyguard and provides him with information about opponents and conspirators. Sometimes it seems that in Zaïre all the "operators," public and private, eventually come together. Devlin helped fight the "secret war" in Laos in the late 1960s, then headed the CIA's Africa desk until his retirement last year. Recently he turned up in Kinshasa—as the U.S. representative of Maurice Tempelman!

"We are living in an age of tyranny," laments Raymond Nicolet, chairman of Risnelia, who indicates he would not like to live under Mobutu's dictatorship. Formerly an adviser to the Algerian Revolutionary Government, a confidant of Ben Bella, and a lawyer for beleaguered trade unionists in Europe and North Africa, Nicolet says he fought for national liberation and social justice in accord with his working-class, syndicalist background. But as his hopes for the Third World faded, he became "weary." His recent clients include financier Bernie Cornfeld, the Mobutu government, and the Chamberlain of the Imperial Court of Iran. He is, perhaps in spite of himself, "an operator." So are Ali and Foreman, however unwittingly. □

BERTOLT BRECHT AND THE FBI

SANDER L. GILMAN

It is difficult to reconstruct the tensions under which German exiles lived in the United States during the 1940s. Even more difficult is it to imagine the pressures, both legal and moral, imposed on writers of the Left exiled in the ultimate capitalist state. The tenor of the official view of the exiles can be judged in part by reading a segment of Presidential Proclamation No. 2526, on the "control of German alien enemies," dated the Monday after Pearl Harbor:

All alien enemies are enjoined to preserve the peace towards the United States . . . and to refrain from actual hostility and giving information, aid and comfort to the enemies of the United States or interfering by word or deed with the defense of the United States or the political processes and public opinions thereof. . . .

The admonition not to interfere in "the political processes and public opinions" of the United States is a reference to the operative law concerning the political conduct of aliens, dating from October 16, 1918, "The Act Concerning the Exclusion and Expulsion of Anarchists and Similar Classes." This law forbade aliens to undertake any political activity to the detriment of the established order. It especially banned "aliens who write or publish . . . any written or printed matter, advocating or teaching opposition to all organized government, or advocating . . . the economic, international, and governmental doctrines of world communism."

In 1920 the redbaiting aspects of this law were amended and all direct references to specific ideologies were excised. The law forbade, but now in much more general terms, the dissemination or authorship of any views which advocated "the overthrow by force or violence of the Government of the United States or of all forms of law. . . ." The elimination of specific references to political parties enabled the monitoring agencies of the Department of Justice to undertake their duties with maximum latitude. In 1940, as a result of the Supreme Court's ruling in the case of *Hines v. Davidowitz*, the federal government had been given the exclusive right to control the activities of all aliens, no matter where their domicile. In striking down the Alien Registration Act of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania the Court determined that state laws violated the concept of the division of powers.

The federal supervision of enemy aliens had a positive side. Diverse state laws often meant harassment on the local level and could have effectively hampered movement between the states. Indeed, the temper of the federal laws had altered greatly since the passage of the original law in 1918. Perhaps the best indication of this change can be seen in the case of *Schneiderman v. the United States*, where a self-declared member of the Communist Party

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Under the Freedom of Information Act (Title 5, United States Code, Section 552) scholars may request access to official documents of federal agencies if these materials can be shown to contribute to historical research. Following the guidelines of the Attorney General's Order 528-73, application was made to the Federal Bureau of Investigation to obtain copies of the documents in its files concerning Bertolt Brecht. Of the 1,000-page dossier existing on Brecht's activities in the United States, only 30 closely censored pages were released. Under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act an appeal has now been filed to require the FBI to disclose the remaining material. The present article is based on the released fragments. It attempts only to sketch the areas of interest and the emerging pattern of Brecht's "official" profile from the point of view of federal bureaucracy during the 1940s. Deleted portions present in the files are noted [. . .]; deletions by the author, as . . .

of the United States was defended by Wendell Willkie. In the Court's ruling, "freedom of thought for applicants for citizenship was given the protection of the Constitution." (See "The Treatment of Aliens in Two Wars" by Carol King, *Lawyers Guild Review* V. 1945.) However, the loosening of specific regulations and the strengthening of the rights of aliens only placed greater burdens on the FBI, which was set the task of keeping records on all suspect immigrants.

On July 21, 1941, Bertolt Eugen Friedrich Brecht, "with aliases, Eugen Bertold Friedrich Brecht, Bert Brecht, Berdat" entered the United States at the port of San Pedro, Calif. The FBI report recorded Brecht's arrival "with wife and two children." Brecht was immediately classified as an enemy alien and his FBI dossier was given the designation "Internal Security—Alien Enemy Control." By 1943 a full dossier on his activities existed in Washington. The Bureau's interest in Brecht was based on its evaluation of his political views: "Subject alleged to have been a Communist in Europe, where he engaged in Underground activity. Subject recently acted as Technical Adviser concerning the Underground for film *Hangmen Also Die*. Subject's writings, some published as late as 1939, advocate the overthrow of Capitalism, establishment of Communist State and use of sabotage by labor to attain its ends." Well into the period of alliance with the Soviet Union, the fear of the "Red Menace," which had motivated the 1918 law controlling the political activities of aliens, seemed to be still operative.

The sources of the FBI's view of Brecht as a former member of the Communist (KPD) underground can be evaluated from the dossier. There are statements such as the following by German immigrants concerning Brecht's politics and character:

On March 5, 1943, [. . .] advised that he knew Brecht by reputation in Germany, where he was considered a radical and an associate of persons with Communistic inclinations [. . .] stated that he became acquainted with

Brecht personally in the United States and found him still a radical and an enemy of Capitalism. According to [. . .], Brecht recently finished work on the moving picture entitled *Hangmen Also Die*, in the production of which he acted as storywriter and Technical Adviser on Underground activity in Europe. Then authenticity of *Hangmen Also Die* is largely due, [. . .] stated, to the work of Subject, whose knowledge of the Underground was attained through personal experience. [. . .] stated that Subject was imprisoned by the Nazis at one time and is believed to have been severely treated by them.

This fantasy of Brecht as a member of the Communist underground permeates the FBI dossier. Brecht's own evaluation of his role in the production of Fritz Lang's *Hangmen Also Die*, a motion picture based on the assassination of Heydrich, the Nazi "protector" of Czechoslovakia, is much more modest, as can be judged from Brecht's working notes. According to Brecht, for Hollywood, "the guerrillas provide a substitute for wild west films—wild east films." Brecht's irony concerning his part in making this film shows how the FBI constantly confused literary expertise and interest with reality.

The agency sought models for political action in Brecht's writing and, of course, found them in his didactic plays. On March 30, 1943 the file records a synopsis of *The Measures Taken*, "a self-styled 'educational play' which advocates Communist world revolution by violent means. Subject also published letter defending this play and advocating its presentation by labor groups." The synopsis, while generally accurate in its presentation of the content of *The Measures Taken*, ignores the ambiguities inherent in the play. In the dossier it reads like a program for revolutionary infiltration. The movement of Russian agents into Manchuria, comprising the plot of the play, could easily have been paralleled to the situation of German Marxists in the United States.

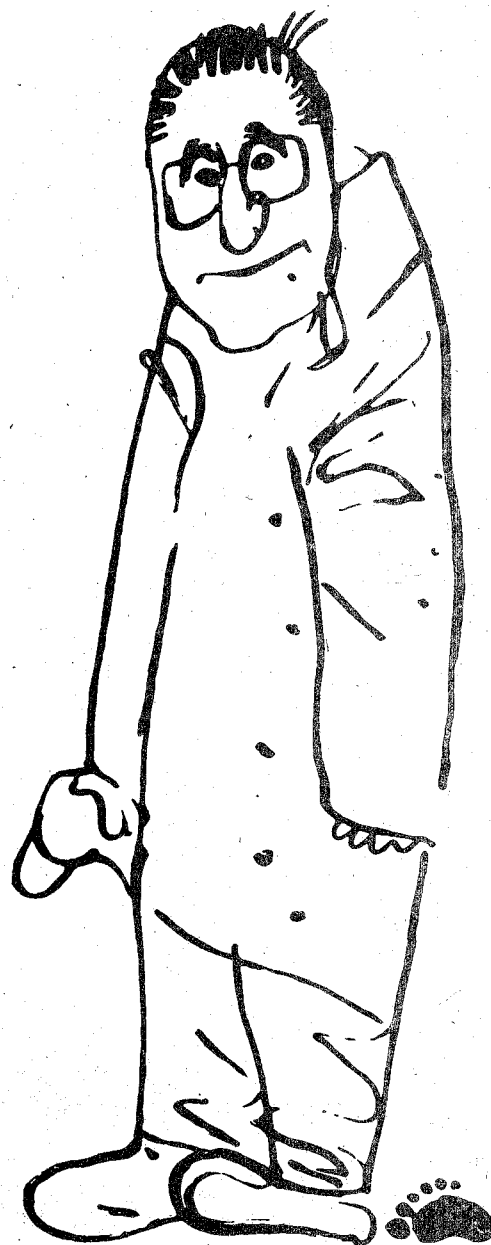
In the spring of 1943 Brecht traveled to New York to discuss *Schweyk in World War II* with the producer/director Josef Aufricht. While he was there the Tribune for Free German Art and Literature, an émigré organization, sponsored a "Brecht evening" that was attended by much of the German exile community in New York. The dossier also contains extensive documentation of Brecht's contacts with left-wing immigrant circles in New York and with figures of the Left such as the publisher Wieland Herzfelde, and the Marxist theoretician Alfred Kantorowicz. Brecht returned to California on May 15, 1943. By now, the pattern of Brecht's actions had convinced the FBI that he was a dangerous "enemy alien," against whom legal measures could be taken. Such a request was made of the United States Attorney in Los Angeles. But on June 26, 1943, the Assistant United States Attorney "advised that no Presidential Warrant was being authorized for Subject's apprehension as an alien enemy at this time. On July 1, 1943, Subject was granted permission to travel to Arrowhead, California, to visit the actor [Peter Lorre]."

Brecht, on his way to visit Lorre, had no idea that he had just escaped incarceration as a potential saboteur. What made up the Assistant United States Attorney's mind is not known, but Brecht's contact with "the well-known actor [Peter Lorre]" and the producer Ernest Pascal may

have reassured the United States Attorney of his acceptability to the established Hollywood community.

The fragments of the FBI dossier continue to trace Brecht's activities after a three-year break in the continuity. Extensive references to Brecht's work with Charles Laughton on the *Life of Galileo* all seem culled from daily newspapers, such as the *New York Journal-American*. But there exists, in the file, a conscious effort to document Brecht's contacts with the immigrant Left. It records the relationship of Brecht's wife, Helene Weigel, with the "left-wing circle" around Salka Viertel, the wife of the immigrant writer Berthold Viertel. All of the literary references in these later documents revolve around the role of Brecht as a potential revolutionary.

The culmination of interest in Brecht came in 1947, when the House Committee on Un-American Activities called him to testify concerning Communist infiltration of



Caricature of Bertolt Brecht by Andrzej Stopka (Akademie der Künste, Berlin)

the film industry. It is evident from the questions asked him that the FBI dossier on Brecht formed the substance of the committee's knowledge about his U.S. activities.

Robert E. Stripling, chief counsel of the committee, began his in-depth interrogation by questioning Brecht concerning his participation in the writing of *Hangmen Also Die*. Brecht did not immediately confess to being an underground Communist agent specializing in guerrilla warfare, as the counsel had probably been led to hope he would from the FBI information before him. On the contrary, his reply reflects the mundane reality of his participation, just as it is reflected in his journal: "I sold a story to a Hollywood firm, *Hangmen Also Die*, but I did not write the screen play myself. I am not a professional screen-play writer. I wrote another story for a Hollywood firm but that story was not produced." Brecht, the underground resistance fighter portrayed in the FBI dossier, was in fact, Brecht, the not very successful scriptwriter.

Toward the close of Brecht's testimony Stripling returned to his role in the film industry, asking whether Hanns Eisler wrote the background music for *Hangmen Also Die*. By tying Brecht to the film industry and to "known Communists" such as Hanns and Gerhard Eisler, Alfred Kantorowicz and Soviet Vice-Consul in Los Angeles, Gregory Kheifets, Stripling attempted to place Brecht in a conspiracy to undermine the "political processes and public opinions" of the United States.

Stripling's attempt to brand Brecht as an active member of the Communist Party collapsed early in the testimony, when Brecht, rather than plead the First Amendment, as had and would the "Hollywood Ten," denied outright any membership in the Communist Party. Stripling's next line of questioning, concerning *The Measures Taken*, followed the FBI interpretation of that play. Brecht made short work of Stripling's interpretation, indicating the origin of the drama in the Japanese No tradition and emphasizing the ambiguity of the conclusion:

The Chairman: So they kill him?

Mr. Brecht: No; they did not kill him—not in this

story. He killed himself. They supported him, but of course they had told him it were better when he disappeared, for him and them and the cause he also believed in.

The outcome of Stripling's questioning was a commendation for Brecht from the acting chairman, Karl Mundt, who praised him as a "good example" for further witnesses before the committee.

As late as January 1948, the FBI continued its dossier on Brecht, amassing information intended to prove that he had perjured himself before the committee or which might open new lines of questioning. On November 15, 1947, soon after Brecht had left New York bound for Europe, the Bureau interviewed yet another informant in quest of material contradictory to Brecht's testimony:

The day before yesterday the writer Bertold Brecht appeared before the Committee on Un-American Activities and stated that he never wrote communistic literature but wrote only against Hitler. In reality, Brecht has always acted, written as a propagandist of Communism and Sovietism. In 1919 he was editorialist of the *Rote Fahne* (Red Flag) in Augsburg. . . . Bertold Brecht was in Moscow several times; he was co-editor of the Russian magazine *Das Wort* (it appeared in Moscow during the Nazi regime in German language). I remember distinctly to have read in one of the issues a diatribe of Brecht against America. I happen to be in contact with friends of Brecht and therefore I know that he has not deviated a bit from the official Russian party line. Several weeks ago he said something like that: he and his like are now obliged to palm themselves off as "democrats." As far as I know, Brecht plans to travel to Europe very soon via Switzerland and I am convinced that he will try to move in the Eastern Zone of Germany in order to work for his communistic ideas.

As a result of the FBI's attempt to substantiate its beliefs concerning Brecht, a "customs stop" was placed on the playwright. But Brecht had left America, never to return. What remains here are the files of the FBI which record, through hearsay and rumor, the exile in America of one of the 20th century's most notable literary figures. □

OZONE ALERT

THE SKY IS LIMITED

DON L. BUNKER

Imagine that the board of directors of a large corporation saw an opportunity to make many millions of dollars every year for a long time, the only catch being that their proposed activities would probably lead to the destruction of civilization after a century or so. Would they go ahead?

The answer is that they probably would, and perhaps already have. It would be simple—all that is necessary

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is to adopt one of several effective ways of pretending, to oneself and others, that no such problem actually exists. One good method is to believe that the past supplies an exact key to the present, and that there is nothing unprecedented or especially menacing about the circumstances in which we now find ourselves. Those able to minimize the clear and present danger of an energy shortage or a world population and food crisis will be able easily to evade the rest of what is said here.

If we were to take a basketball and wrap it tightly with a few layers of the flimsiest plastic foil from the supermarket, we would have a fairly accurate scale model of the earth and its atmosphere. From down here

it looks as if there is a lot of air; actually the complex structure over our heads is thin and vulnerable. It has to do many important jobs for us, different ones at different levels, in a space so limited that we habitually fly above most of it. We are now able to disrupt these vital functions in a variety of ways. This article is only about the possibilities for finishing things up that have something to do with the atmosphere. There are *lots* of others.

(1) *Keep on burning things.* Three parts in 10,000 of the air is carbon dioxide, but it is important out of all proportion to its amount. Besides being essential for plant growth, it keeps the surface of the earth warm enough for man and the other animals to prosper. It does this in an interesting, indirect way.

All hot objects glow, the wavelength they emit being shorter the hotter they are. Sunlight is peaked at the colors we see with. The earth, being much colder, radiates infrared—invisible, although our skin is a sensor for it, as when we stand near a fire with our eyes closed. If there were no air, the earth's infrared would escape into space and it would be very, very cold down here. But the carbon dioxide intercepts it. This is the Greenhouse Effect. More or less carbon dioxide in the air makes the earth's greenhouse work more or less efficiently.

Burning things adds carbon dioxide to the air. It is estimated that doubling its amount might raise the average earth temperature by as much as 7°, enough to move the climate of the American Southwest somewhere up near the Canadian border. In the century after 1860, when we first began to squander our fossil fuels, the carbon dioxide level rose 15 per cent and the earth's temperature went up one or more degrees, most prominently in the northern latitudes where most of the action takes place. The picture is complicated because that is just about the size of the largest natural temperature fluctuations that are known to have occurred, and because lately there has been a mild cooling trend that may or may not be significant in view of things yet to be described. But to take the possibilities one at a time, suppose carbon dioxide is our only important problem, and that our present rate of producing it goes on. What will happen?

As we continue to warm up, the ice caps will begin to be affected, perhaps around the year 2000. The resulting rise in sea level will be about a foot per five years, so many of us will live to see some of our favorite places disappear into the waves. Some people have even suggested that the resulting redistribution of weight on the earth's crust might bring on a new age of violent earthquakes and mountain building. The world could be an exciting place by 2075.

(2) *Keep on making smoke and raising dust.* This and carbon dioxide can't both be main problems; they work in opposite directions. Making the atmosphere murkier will cool things off simply because less sunshine will come through. It is known that the amounts of dust and of tiny liquid droplets have been increasing dramatically in recent years. While the direct effect of this may be small, it is capable of amplification, if somewhat colder winters increase the size and duration of the earth's snow cover. Satellite-based measurements indicate that the reflectivity of sunlight by snow and ice was noticeably

greater in 1972 and 1973, and that may well have been a direct consequence of the murkier atmosphere.

Deciding whether in the long run the things we do are warming the earth or cooling it off is a tricky business, requiring large amounts of careful research. At present there is no general agreement on which it is, although lately the cooling-off view appears to be gaining some ground. This situation has led some to propose that since these two effects cancel each other, we are free to go on behaving just as before. Perhaps these are the same people who twenty years ago could be heard to admit the limited reserves of petroleum, but "there's enough for my lifetime, so I should worry."

(3) *Ride that SST.* The United States has fortunately suspended its efforts in the supersonic transport field. The reason *should* have been that this could have been a fast and effective civilization finisher. High above the greenhouse roof and the altitude where ordinary airplanes fly, there is a tenuous layer of ozone. It is formed in the stratosphere by the action of sunlight on oxygen; all oxygen comes originally from the photosynthetic ac-



Uluschak, Edmonton Journal (Canada)

Nonreturnable

tion of green plants. Ozone and oxygen together screen out the lethal ultraviolet part of sunlight—this is what made it safe for our remote evolutionary ancestors to come crawling out of the ocean.

Ozone is a highly active substance, as might be expected since part of its job is to convert sunlight safely into chemical energy. It reacts with just about anything, and any such reaction reduces its amount and lets through more of the part of the ultraviolet that it absorbs. Nowadays we know enough about chemical reaction rates to notice that there is less ozone between us and the sun than we would expect to find. That is, we realize that we don't even understand all the naturally occurring ways it can be destroyed.

The main villain in the SST exhaust is nitrogen monoxide (also implicated in smog formation). This and ozone make nitrogen dioxide and oxygen; sunlight and nitrogen dioxide make nitrogen monoxide again, which can thus do its thing over and over again without being destroyed—an excellent example of how a catalyst works. The most recent calculations suggest that an SST fleet might be able to undermine the whole system in only a few years. The early symptoms would be bad sunburns and a lot of dead plants. Things would grow steadily more unpleasant from then on.

(4) *Fly that space shuttle.* Its exhaust also goes into the ozone layer. It is difficult for an independent scientist to find out what is going on in the NASA establishment. There has certainly been some study of possible air pollution near the launching site, but official curiosity about the effect on stratospheric ozone has not been visible.

As a matter of plain common sense, though, we can certainly anticipate that the exhaust of such an arrangement will contain an unusually wide and unpleasant variety of chemical garbage. Proposing to run the shuttle anyway is a little like combining the city water reservoir with the trash dump, on the ground that no one component of trash has been shown to be both present and harmful in a drinking glass. The whole problem urgently needs public scientific scrutiny and has received little.

(5) *Spray that spray can.* The propellant gas inside has to be a rather special chemical. Besides supplying neither too much nor too little pressure, it must be completely inert toward deodorant, furniture wax, plastic whipped cream topping, etc. The material of choice is commercially called Freon, actually a family of substances of which fluorotrichloromethane—one fluorine and three chlorines all attached to a carbon atom—is representative. We are currently adding nearly a million tons of these things to the air every year. The accumulated amount is now measurable. We breathe it in and out all the time without harming ourselves.

Indeed, the stuff is so inert that nothing at all will happen to it until it gets up there where the ozone and ultraviolet are. Then it will be broken up by sunlight and the fragments will go to work on the ozone, much like nitrogen monoxide. A particularly nasty aspect of this situation is its delayed action: it takes some years for the Freon to make its way from ground level up to the stratosphere—spray now, pay later. We can't even say for sure that we haven't already done ourselves in.

(6) *Do nothing and wait for the glaciers.* No one knows exactly what causes ice ages to happen. One attractive speculation is that they are linked to periodic outbursts of volcanic activity, which produces dust, which has the same effect as do the man-made particles, only in larger scope. It is thought that volcanic events during scientifically historic times, such as the 1883 Krakatau eruption, have produced short-lived but quite measurable climate changes.

Some fascinating things have however been found out. Apparently an ice age, once triggered, can become established in as little as 100 years. This is known from studies of old arctic ice layers and of the ancient position of sea level, among other things. The peak of warm, comfortable climate was passed roughly between 5000 and

4000 B.C., and we have been cooling off—with temporary reversals—ever since the Pyramids were built. If we simply assume that interglacial periods might be symmetric around their midpoint, it is a perfectly reasonable speculation that the late warming trend could be our last such fluctuation, and that little but misery lies ahead. Do the winters seem to be getting longer and colder lately?

If we understood things better, we might be able to take corrective action. We could, for example, concentrate on burning the rest of the fossil fuel as smokelessly as possible, if it were clear that that was a wise thing to do and if we knew how much more carbon dioxide would be advisable. But this would require considerably more curiosity than we now display about our planet and its interaction with man-made chemistry.

All these things are widely known to scientists, but not to the general public. That is certainly not an unusual circumstance—for example, a detailed and accurate forecast of the 1974 energy squeeze was once presented to President Truman by a committee of scientific worriers. Why are these matters so generally unfamiliar, and why do we give them such extremely low priority? Chemists joke about the First Commandment of Chemical Politics: Thou shalt not suggest anything that menaces anyone's profits. Despite this healthy sarcasm, too many scientists subscribe to a milder form of the same thing—don't speak up until you are absolutely sure of your ground. Thus we contribute to the presumption that any industrial procedure is innocent until proven guilty beyond any possibility of doubt. This precludes the application of scientific good judgment to uncertain and perplexing situations, and we have periodic demonstrations (example: thalidomide) of the folly of acting first and paying attention to the research afterward.

Those who have a stake in this misapplication of supposed scientific standards of discourse to the public arena don't even seem to understand the conventions they are trying to apply. Scientific truth is never unanimous. It advances collectively and in spite of colorful and stubborn individual divergences. To propose that we require total scientific agreement before blowing the whistle on something a corporation or agency wants to do is to agree to wait forever. If the board of directors desires to hear a sincere opinion exonerating them from the probable consequences of their actions, they will always be able to find one. It is noticeable that in the present depressed job market for chemists and others who understand the material in this article, those who are most deficient in the ability to tell people what they want to hear seem to be at the greatest disadvantage.

Suppose there is a 90 per cent chance that each of the six items given here in fact presents no cause for alarm. Simple arithmetic: the chance of all of them being false at once is nine-tenths to the sixth power—about a half. This would give us a fifty-fifty chance that at least one of them is correct. If it is, our great-grandchildren, whose resources we have already used up, will pay even more heavily for our comfort, convenience and space-age entertainment. There is no way for their opinion of us to be very high, but perhaps we can still salvage some of their esteem by opening our minds to more of the things that are going on around us. □

BOOKS & THE ARTS

Three Women Work It Out

YONNONDIO: From the Thirties. By Tillie Olsen. *A Seymour Lawrence Book.* Delacorte Press. 196 pp. \$6.95.

PORTRAIT OF A MARRIAGE. By Nigel Nicolson. *Atheneum Publishers.* 249 pp. \$10. Paper: Bantam Books. 268 pp. \$1.95.

SMALL CHANGES. By Marge Piercy. *Doubleday & Co.* 562 pp. \$8.95. Paper: Fawcett/Crest Books. 547 pp. \$1.75.

CATHARINE R. STIMPSON

Suppose that we could recover the literary texts that have been lost, censored, and suppressed. Suppose, too, that we could figure out why they had been erased from consciousness while other texts had come down to us as cultural legacies. Our discoveries might add up to a new literary and social history, an analogy to the way in which the concept of the black hole has given astrophysicists the premise for a new cosmology.

Tillie Olsen's novel, *Yonnondio*, is a recovered text. She began the book in 1932. She was then 19 years old. A chapter was published and praised in 1934. Two or three years later she abandoned the project and, for a long time, writing itself. Her silence was less the result of a romantic rendezvous with the abyss at the edge of language than of acute self-doubt, the responsibilities of raising four children, the need to hold a full-time job, the demands of community tasks, and the moral pressure of radical politics. Such a constellation of causes is more apt to affect the writer who is a woman than the writer who is a man.

Nearly forty years later, her reputation as a writer finally established through a collection of stories, *Tell Me a Riddle*, Olsen was going through some old papers. Among them she found the chaotic, disheveled, unfinished manuscript that she had thought she had lost and that she has now reconstructed.

Ostensibly, the action of *Yonnondio* occurs in the early 1920s. It concerns the Holbrook family: Jim, the physically powerful father; Anna, the once

energetic and idealistic mother; the five children they have, within eight years, conceived in genuine passion and she has borne in some pain. The Holbrooks represent the people from whose toil a Tom Buchanan profits sufficiently to buy a Daisy a string of pearls and himself a string of polo ponies. Jim works in a mine, on a tenant farm, on a sewer construction crew, in a hellish meat-packing plant. Anna struggles with the children in the houses in which Jim settles them. When she can, she takes in laundry.

The Holbrooks are vital and decent. Their children, for whom they are ambitious, justify their struggle to realize the American dream. Capable of love in the present, they wish to exercise that love for the sake of the future. Like Whitman at his most cheerful, Olsen believes that human nature, if permitted to express itself freely and spontaneously, will be good. (She takes her novel's title from a Whitman poem.) Physical nature is the most fertile setting for such expression, although moments of human community, a family singing or a picnic, can suggest a harmonious balance among people, animals, plants, earth, water, fire, air. The Holbrooks are happiest on the farm, which they lose. The industries Olsen despises most—mining, early agribusiness, slaughterhouses—spoil both human and physical nature for financial gain.

The "overwhelming, hostile forces" of modern capitalism bar the Holbrooks from their Eden. The modesty, the simplicity of their hopes help to make their failure poignantly grievous. Anna wants nothing more than:

School for the kids, Jim working near her, on the earth, lovely things to keep, brass lamps, bright tablecloths, vines over the doors, and roses twining.

Eventually, an angry, frustrated Jim will brutalize his wife and children; an exhausted Anna will also turn on the children, will lapse into a psychic coma; a sensitive little girl will escape from an urban slum into a memory of the farm so enveloping that she veers toward schizophrenia. Anna, who has nearly died during a pregnancy terminated by a miscarriage, weeps on the back porch of a rickety house, which the stink of garbage and packing plants commands:

The children. What's going to happen with them? How we going to look out for them in this damn world? Oh Jim,

the children. Seems like we cant [sic] do nothing for them.

As Jim comforts her, he silently makes "old vows again, vows that life will never let him keep."

Olsen's compelling gift is her ability to render lyrically the rhythms of consciousness of victims. Imaginative, affectionate, they are also alert to the sensual promise of their surroundings. Harsh familial, social, political and economic conditions first cramp, then maim, and then seek to destroy them. The fevers of poverty, dread and futility inflame their sensibilities. They risk reduction to defensive fantasy, pain, madness or cruelty. They remain, if in shadow, heroes and heroic.

Olsen assumes that such victims cannot often speak for themselves. Their dumbness is no fault of their own. Her self-imposed task is to become their voice as well as their witness, their text as well as their mourner. She signifies her respect for their dignity in the exactitude and scrupulous effort of her work. She sardonically tells her reader that the received categories of culture, such as classicism and romanticism, also fit the citizens of a Wyoming town as they wait to hear how many men have died in a mine explosion that official cowardice, incompetence and corruption have caused. If she were to take part in that theological quarrel over whether an artist's primary commitment is to craft or to social change, she might say that an artist can work for change through writing about the oppressed with all the craft and tools at hand. She also comments on the economic basis of high culture. She writes of an adolescent boy forced into the mines:

Earth take your dreams that a few may languidly lie on couches and trill "How exquisite" to paid dreamers.

Olsen's politics and anger are a part of a particular decade: her subtitle, "From the Thirties," is seriously meant. She notes that *Yonnondio* "bespeaks the consciousness and roots of that decade, if not its events." An anachronism or two betrays the gap between narrative setting and actual reference. Despite her nostalgia for rural ritual, she refuses to offer an exclusive vision of bucolic joy. She wants unions and solidarity among all workers, no matter what their race or ethnic heritage. In an apostrophe to a rebellious young worker which approaches polemic, she writes:

Catharine Stimpson, a member of the Bernard English Department, is the editor of *Synthesis*, a journal to be devoted to the new scholarship about women (University of Chicago).

I'm sorry . . . as hell we weren't stronger and could get to you in time and show you that kind of individual revolt was no good, kid, no good at all, you had to bide your time and take it till there were enough of you to fight it all together on the job . . . till the day millions of fists clamped in yours, and you could wipe out the whole thing, the whole goddam thing, and a human could be a human for the first time on earth.

The status of being a lost text is one of the few elements that *Yonnondio* and *Portrait of a Marriage* have in common. The popularity of the Nicolson book has widely vented the tale of its publication. In 1962, Nigel Nicolson, the executor of the estate of his mother, Vita Sackville-West, the English writer, was in her sitting room. He had been there only six times in the past thirty years. His father, Harold Nicolson, the English diplomat, writer and politician, was alive, but distraught over his wife's death.

Nigel found a locked Gladstone bag. Inside was an autobiographical notebook, written by his mother in 1920-21, in which she tried "to purge her mind and heart of a love that had possessed her, a love for another woman, Violet Trefusis." In her late 20s, married to Harold, with two sons, Vita had wanted to elope with Violet. Only their husbands' and Vita's feelings aborted the affair. Vita probably had a second motive for creating her lucid, despairing, passionate manuscript: her wish to speak to future generations which, having swum another lap in the evolutionary pool, might have more liberal notions about sex, love and marriage.

Death and a complex reticence kept from Vita Sackville-West the dubious privilege that life and accident gave to Tillie Olsen—the chance, in maturity, to edit one's youthful work. Many have praised Nigel Nicolson for the tactful eloquence, the generosity and care with which he edited and commented upon his mother's "truth-telling." He has earned his praise, but the book is obscurely suspect. Behind the filial courtliness, which his capacity for realism makes credible, I sense an emotion as tight as a clenched fist. From time to time it emerges, gloved in the polite rhetoric of a patronizing charity. Take this sentence, a sudden break in a passage that otherwise eulogizes Vita:

Now that I know everything, I love her more, as my father did, *because* she was tempted, *because* she was weak.

Why, too, does he comment on some events, but not on others? One example. Vita kept from Harold the fact that she was sleeping with a woman, Rosamund

OF RAIN AND AIR

*All day I have been closed up
inside rooms, speaking of trivial
matters. Now at last I have come out
into the night, myself a center*

of darkness.

*Beneath the clouds the low sky glows
with scattered light. I can hardly think
this is happening. Here in this bright absence*

*of day, I feel myself opening out
with contentment.*

*All around me the soft rain is whispering
of thousands of feet of air*

invisible above us.

Wayne Dodd

Grosvenor, during their engagement. A tearful Rosamund was to be one of Vita's bridesmaids. Nigel discreetly italicizes his mother's duplicity. Only through printing a letter that Vita wrote Harold in 1960 does Nigel let on that Harold, too, kept from Vita, during their engagement, the fact that he was a homosexual. During the marriage, by mutual consent, he continued to sleep with men, she with women.

Nigel plausibly suggests that Vita wanted the manuscript published after her death. If Tillie Olsen lost her unfinished text largely because of the external circumstances of her life, Vita Sackville-West apparently concealed her text largely because of internal constraints and inhibitions. Perhaps she feared more public scandal in her life. She had already endured court fights about her mother's legitimacy; the disposition of Knole, the famous family estate; and the will in which a jolly, wealthy gentleman had left her mother a fortune. Certainly, and decently, she wanted to protect the privacy of others.

It would also be odd if guilt and shame about her lesbianism had not moved her to secrecy. The pseudonyms she used, which Nigel decodes, are a device that might satisfy the wish to protect both others and the self. Vita may have been the "incredible egoist" she claims to be. She may have been wildly in love with Violet, who had also been one of her few childhood friends. She writes about Violet in a rhetoric that echoes, if thinly and more possessively, that of Cathy Earnshaw in *Wuthering Heights* when she speaks of Heathcliff. Vita proclaims:

Violet is *mine*, she always has been, it is inescapable. I knew it then, albeit only through my obscurely but quite obstinately proprietary attitude; she knew it too, less obscurely, and took

all the active measures to make me realize it. . . . She was *mine*—I can't express it more emphatically or more accurately than that. . . .

On her writing table, Vita had two portraits: one of the Brontë sisters; one of Virginia Woolf, whom she admired and adored.

Nevertheless, as she parses the grammar of the self, she draws a wretchedly divided woman. Only the fact that she is the subject of the sentence of her life unites the two sides of her character. There is the "pure" woman, who loves her family, and there is the "perverted" woman, who loves Violet. The pure Vita is heterosexual, submissive, nice, loving and feminine. The perverted Vita is homosexual, domineering, nasty, often brutal (she says), and masculine. She costumes herself as a young soldier named Julien to stroll on the streets with Violet.

Violet seems to have aroused in Vita physical desire and a sense of psychic unity. Virginia Woolf seems to have inspired an erotic chivalry and respect. Otherwise, Vita, on the evidence of *Portrait of a Marriage*, also seems unable to reconcile a lasting psychological and sexual love. Neither, apparently, could Harold Nicolson. Indoctrinated as we have been by Freud and Lawrence, we find such a split in a man less novel than we do in a woman. Vita and Harold were lucky to have met each other. Surely their marriage could not have survived if their incompatibilities had not proved so compatible. Their son says as much.

The machinery of her culture must have helped to imprint in Vita her ambivalence toward the lesbianism she never loathed enough to repress. Yet she notes the bitter congruities between the macrocosm of history and the microcosm of personality only when her interests are obviously imperiled. She tells Harold:

Women ought to have freedom the same as men when they are young. It is a rotten and ridiculous system at present; it's simply cheating one of one's youth.

Significantly, the one complaint that writers as diverse as Tillie Olsen, Vita Sackville-West and Marge Piercy share is that the sex roles imposed upon women are usually as constricting as a noose.

More often, Vita's political consciousness is either a blank or a contemptible, silly social snobbery. She enjoys her rung on the ladder of class. She sneers at the middle classes, glorifies her aristocratic paternal ancestry and romanticizes her more problematic maternal ancestry. For years she believed, with family help, that her maternal great-grandfather, a barber in Málaga, was a Spanish duke who illegitimately sired a Spanish dancer with the aid of a gypsy acrobat.

To learn to dislike the hollow tracts of *Portrait of a Marriage*, read Vita's account of one of the more tormented moments of her affair with Violet. Though she is about to marry, Violet wants Vita to take her away. Harold has sent Vita a series of letters which remind her of his sweetness, gentleness and dependency. She goes to Violet to tell her good-by before she returns to Harold in Paris.

There was a dreary slut scrubbing the doorstep, for it was very early, and I stepped in over the soapy pail, and saw Violet in the morning-room. Then I went to Paris, alone. That is one of the worst days I remember.

Now imagine that the "dreary slut" is an English Anna Holbrook.

Fundamentally, *Portrait of a Marriage* is wonderful gossip. Its appeal is neither the dignity of the Sackville-West/Nicolson sensibility, nor their talents, but the exotic drama of private life. Like all good gossip, it hints at the nature of prevailing social codes and customs. It tells of the vagaries of human temperament. It reassures us of the comedy that can accompany and lie beyond intrigue and confusion. Vita did suffer. She was unable to abdicate her marriage for an unruly and despised passion. However, her marriage brought her a "permanent and undiluted happiness." She lived and loved another day. She wrote her books and cultivated her famous gardens. She was safe and secure.

Earnest, determined to document the connections between public and private, exalted by visions of a more equitable future, Marge Piercy resembles a Tillie Olsen a generation later. A feature of generational change is Piercy's fierce resolve that her texts will not be lost

and her assumption that none of her material need be concealed. She also resembles, though she is American, the young Doris Lessing, particularly the Lessing who wrote the first four novels in the "Children of Violence" series. There is the same interest in political theory; the radical criticism that adds media manipulation and pollution to the long catalogue of social evils; the use of plot to discuss important problems; the willingness to sacrifice linguistic flair for detail, clarity and accuracy.

In her first novel, *Going Down Fast*, Piercy explored the radical Left in Chicago after the end of the Korean War, but before the putative end of the Vietnamese War. In her next book, *Dance the Eagle to Sleep*, she projected what young members of the radical Left might suffer if America were to become a totalitarian state. Now, in *Small Changes*, she takes up the radical Left in the Boston area under Nixon after 1968. Among the fragments of the New Minority are the "Catholic Left, old SDS people, pacifists, women's movement, Socialist Workers' Party, gay liberation, Progressive Labor, academic liberals, and some old Peace and Freedom Party members."

Largely because of the women's movement, the Left is more animated and less suspended than it might be. Piercy is recording radical feminism giving birth to itself. She wishes, as well, to justify its internal organization, its rituals and its rights. She concentrates upon the creation of a new sexuality and a new psychology, which will permeate and bind a broad, genuine equality. So doing, she shifts the meaning of small change. The phrase no longer refers to something petty and cheap but to the way in which a New Woman, a New Man, will be generated: one halting step after another. The process of transformation will be as painstaking as the dismantling of electrified barbed wire. Piercy believes that women will pioneer such change, but she admires the male radicals who chip away at sex roles as they settle down for the long political struggle.

Two women characters carry the burden of Piercy's narrative. Beth Walker is the daughter of a G.E. plant guard in Syracuse. Through her the novel reveals Piercy's sympathy for working-class men. Half-conscious of their own exploitation, they go on to exploit and bully their women in order to relieve their aggressions and to assert their dignity. Miriam Berg is the daughter of a phony, charming folk singer, who was blacklisted, and a high school social studies teacher in New York City. Even-

tually Miriam gets a Ph.D. in computer science at M.I.T. Through her the novel shows Piercy's interest in modern technology. She never inflates her love for nature into neo-primitivism. If science can serve human needs and if its machines can lessen "human drudgery," Piercy will endorse it.

As children, both Beth and Miriam have dreamed of adventure, of other worlds. Unhappily, both were plain. They failed to win the prizes awarded to ornamental little girls. Their response was to be good, to embody the virtues of docility, dutifulness and obedience. Both have been pinched in the contradiction between the boldness they once allowed themselves in fantasy and the submissiveness demanded of them at home and school by themselves and others. After high school, working-class Beth marries. Middle-class Miriam goes to college.

Ironically, the more deprived and shyer Beth is the braver of the two. She literally runs away from the disaster zone of marriage twice, the second time after her husband and a private detective have forced her to return to Syracuse. She supports herself as a secretary, keypunch operator and cleaning woman. She lives alone, then in a women's commune, and then with a woman, her lover. Wanda, once married to a militant Puerto Rican anti-war activist, has founded a women's theatre group that Beth joins. Wanda, refusing to testify before a grand jury about her ex-husband, is sent to jail. Her grim, bigoted parents win custody of her two sons. Beth, while Wanda serves her time, arranges to kidnap the two willing children and for all four to live underground in Cleveland after Wanda's release.

Beth's weapons are self-sufficiency, enough will to preserve the core of self, a capacity to grow more receptive to others, and comparative sexual innocence. She avoids the erotic and emotional traps into which the "yeasty" Miriam falls. Piercy proposes that a woman who develops the sexual energy Miriam learns to develop will be hurt. Men will treat her only as a sexual creature; only as a mistress, wife, courtesan or mother, a biological role in which Aphrodite has lost out to a Demeter stripped of her old civilizing powers. Piercy argues that real sexual liberation will place sex within a humane context comparable to the existence of the sexual organs within the whole body.

Intellectually gifted, in a field in which men resent and resist brilliant women, Miriam has two long, interlocking affairs. One lover is Phil, a slum kid from Boston who becomes a poet, gradu-

ate student, self-destructive junkie, and at last, in an act of self-redemption, a man who realizes the decency he has partially revealed to Miriam. Emotionally, he commits himself to Dorine, an important minor character; she has taught herself that she is worthy of self-respect, unworthy of self-abasement. Professionally, Phil becomes a carpenter. Piercy has an old-fashioned belief in work. She distinguishes, in terms of value, not between blue-collar and white-collar jobs but between alienated and nonalienated labor.

Miriam's second lover is Jackson, a dropout who crawls back into the middle class as a college teacher. Though he has brains, sexual confidence and some compassion, Jackson dominates and punishes Miriam. His most intense relationship is with Phil. In their masculine "marriage," friendship is inseparable from rivalry; they are nervously worried about the faintest taint of homosexuality. The two men have met in Vietnam. The thinnest of the layers of *Small Changes* is the story of Vietnam's effect upon the Americans who fought there. Piercy knows it was bad, but the novel stutters when it tries to incarnate the trauma.

Miriam, breaking with both Phil and Jackson, marries her boss, Neil Stone. She learns to cook, she leaves her job, she has two babies. Slowly, imperfectly, she also learns that she has acted out a woman's version of the legend of the emperor and his new clothes. She has believed herself to be richly dressed in her husband's love and esteem. In fact, she is naked, without garments or a title. As slowly, as imperfectly, she initiates her series of small changes. She wants her daughter to be stronger than she has been. She starts a course about computers in a free school. She helps Beth and Wanda to flee. Piercy writes:

... she could weave no security, no protection against her worst fears. But of such connections were wrought an end to the slow relentless dying back she had known, and the slow undramatic refunding, single thought by small decision by petty act, of a life: her life. That life shone too, dimly but with considerable heat, banked coals in the dark.

Exemplary characters in *Small Changes* live in advance of their country. The novel's end must be juxtaposed with its beginning. In the first scene, Beth, reflected in her mother's "vanity," is being dressed for her wedding. She believes marriage to Jim will bring love, love will bring happiness. However, she is also honest enough to sense that the image in the "cave of mirrors" is false, "a dress wearing a girl," a role hiding a person. In the last scene, Neil's schem-

ing, harried secretary-mistress is dreaming of the wedding he has promised her. She gloats:

He was beginning to love her, he was wanting her, and soon she would not be alone anymore.

The most damaging emotion in the old sexuality and the old psychology that *Small Changes* is rejecting is fear. Men are afraid of feeling. They are afraid of women, whom they mythologize as creatures who will devour them. So doing, they transfer to their partners their own wish to possess women. At his most appealing—a Phil, for example—the dominating man is a sensitive Pygmalion. At his crudest, the dominating man rapes a young girl. Women fear that men will not want them. To be wanted by a man is enough to persuade a woman that she wants the man and that she loves and is loved. Miriam embodies the anxiety of the woman who trembles if she thinks a man does not want her. "Somehow Miriam had given over an essential part of her identity to . . . [Neil], to feeling sure he loved her, and she feared a glacial movement of his judgment against her."

Piercy locates much of the genesis of fear in the family. A woman, with her male lovers and her husband, re-enacts the drama she has played out with an indifferent father. She imitates the drama she has seen her mother unravel. Yet, as Piercy assigns culpability, she seems less angry at the family than she

is at corporations and the state. Family members are, after all, the captives of those institutions. She also implies that the family more deeply harrows the interior landscape of women than of men. It is woman's sphere, woman's traditional goal. Men may join gangs, armies, teams and the work force.

The appearance of the paperback edition of *Small Changes* offers critics a chance to appraise the reputation they have concocted for Piercy. They often say her novels, though schematically imaginative, are lifeless, turgid; that her grasp of the techniques of realism is too flaccid to permit her to realize her ambitions. She is a good architect, an erratic builder.

The error is to assume that Piercy's genre is psychological and social realism. The extent of her authorial analyses and descriptions, the bulk of her characters' introspection, tempt critics to that mistake. Her real genre is didactic and visionary allegory. Her characters are intended to personify modern states-of-being caught in the modern state. Her dialogue is necessarily stylized. If she is long-winded, her subjects and her subject matter are morally important, the survival issues of her time. Abhorring the trivial and the arcane, she wants her novels "to be of use," a phrase that was the title of her last book of poems.

If Piercy's text were lost in a box, or hidden in a traveling bag, she would find it less a personal sorrow or personal necessity than a political defeat. □

Poet of the Inner Voyage

THE DIARY OF ANAIS NIN: Volume Five 1947-1955. Edited and with a preface by Gunther Stuhlmann. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 275 pp. \$7.95.

HARRIET ZINNES

Twenty years ago Anaïs Nin, pained by the commercial press's rejection of her work, wrote in her diary (now in its fifth published volume, covering the years 1947-55), "America tried to kill me as a writer, with indifference, with insults." This year she has been accorded the most prestigious literary recognition that America can give—election to the National Institute of Arts and

Harriet Zinnes teaches English at Queens College, the City University of New York. She is the author of prose poems entitled "Entropisms" (New Directions 27) and of an article, "The Fiction of Anaïs Nin," that has just appeared in The Casebook of Anaïs Nin (New American Library).

Letters. Such an ironic development is not unusual in American letters, but it does make the publishing community suspect. The profit motive is still the guide for the commercial press, but whereas in the past there was some accommodation for what used to be called a "prestige" book, today such publication in the trade has diminished almost to the vanishing point. While vast industrial enterprises receive aid from the government to prevent bankruptcy, the bankruptcy of the whole polis because of the lack of comparable governmental aid to the publishing community is overlooked. More and more small presses come and go while writers try to publish the "unprofitable" serious artist at their own expense.

Anaïs Nin in all her diaries is, in a sense, asking for major support of the one force that can help develop a healthy society. Art, to Nin, is the restorer. Without the promulgation of the arts, societies perish. New political sys-

tems, new economic solutions, she feels, cannot do the work that is the function of art—restoring the balance between the inner and outer worlds. Her belief in the power of art, therefore, is different from the aesthete's view as it is different from the view of the classicist. Here is an aesthetic orientation that is completely contemporary. Anais Nin makes the claim that the psychological propels the aesthetic—that the power of art depends on the strength of an inner world, a strength that can be fully released only with the help of psychoanalysis. In a letter quoted in this volume of the diary to the sociological, Marxist critic Maxwell Geismar (who here becomes the symbol of what is wrong with American letters), Nin states that the malaise of politics can be eliminated only if we go "the way of Freud . . . to study and tackle the hostility within ourselves."

Impractical as a wholesale analysis may be in an age where millions are starving in Asia and Africa, the projection of corrupt and hostile selves onto national and international situations seems exactly what is happening in our Watergate context. Yet my own Freudianism weakens as I contemplate what would have happened had the whole Nixon administration submitted to analysis. The injection needles of Dr. Max Jacobson—a figure who appears fleetingly in the present diary—would have been the more likely Washingtonian palliative, restoring corrupt energies for more political malfeasance. Dr. Inge Bogner, the sensitive, brilliant analyst, to whom Anais Nin turned when her publishing frustrations "sapped too much of my energy in fruitless anger," and who is here a central focus and a foil to the Geismars of the literary world, would probably have never been invited into the bugged rooms of our bureaucracy. Freudianism heals only when it is invited to do so.

But in art neurotic behavior must be dealt with. Nin makes a strong claim in this volume of the diary for the necessary "balance" of "true psychological realism with external realism." "American writing," she asserts in another letter to Geismar (whom at one point she calls a "spiritual crab"), "is committed to its false realism, and until neurosis is recognized as a negative proof of the presence of a powerful unconscious which can be converted into positive use, we will continue to refuse the inner voyage I believe essential to the wholeness and whole vision which will humanize us faster than new systems."

The inner voyages of one of the most remarkable women of our time,

Anais Nin, are amply transformed into the world of her fiction. It was a world that for long was misunderstood as one that was shadowy, unreal, poetic to the point of disappearance. But such works as *Spy in the House of Love*, which the diarist describes in this volume as she attempts unsuccessfully to achieve commercial publication, are only now seen for what they are. Her world, as she so well defines it here, is a "world of psychic transcendence." "I realize," she notes, "that my physical world is subject to such intense emotional lighting that it becomes for most people invisible." The intensity of her bare physical experiencing, the reality as she

describes it in her diaries, becomes so luminous as she transforms it into fiction that it has the wavering shapes, the fluctuating motions of the dream. James Leo Herlihy, the young writer whom Nin had met at a visit to Black Mountain College in 1948, and whom later she describes as "the twin in writing I had wished for," explains this intense quality of Anais Nin as an exact notation, "her way of raising, without effort, one's view of life; and without dissemblance, making it more exciting." To me, however, the intense Nin quality arises from the kind of immersion in a real world that is not a mere sum of sense impressions but a fusion, a whole-

"Poets are the verbal antennae of a people.

The awareness they distill and convert into the dynamics of language is somehow present in the populace at large."

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Poetry and the Common Life

M. L. Rosenthal



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ness, a simultaneous experiencing of inner and outer worlds. Perhaps because Nin believes both that "happiness is in the physical life" and that "art is our only proof of continuity in a life of the spirit," her fictional worlds have at once the intensity and the invisibility that she speaks of.

In Volume Five of the diary the writer's desire to make inner and outer worlds an intense equation of a single heightened moment of consciousness is beautifully illustrated in several episodes. There is the hospital episode in which, despite the removal of a tumor, she is able to transcend the immediate dreariness and pain by wearing a red wool burnoose as she is wheeled to the X-ray room and later as she walks in the corridors. Almost as if those who seek intensity find it everywhere, she has the luck to come upon a whole tribe of gypsies who fill the drab corridors as they visit the king of their clan who is in the hospital at the same time as the diarist. There are also the masquerade parties given by Renate Druks and Paul Matthiesen that by their nature are a fusion of conscious and unconscious selves. One, a party where all came "dressed as our madness," inspired the writer to wear a birdcage. Some of the pictures of the scene taken by Renate Druks are reproduced in the book, as are some interesting stills from *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*, a film by Kenneth Anger, an artist who makes several appearances in this latest volume of the diary.

A desire to heighten the actual by an intensification of the moment is characteristic of the relationship between Nin and Herlihy—a relationship so different from that between Nin and Gore Vidal described in an earlier diary. Both knew in their relationship that "euphoria" that "comes from the freedom of improvisation and the fact that we never judge each other." That elation, that invigoration is what an intense Nin experience is as it opens up the electrifying impulses of the inner along with the facts of the outer world. Her realization of this inner power, the power of the unconscious as it is released in art, or the power of art to make more intense the ordinary experiences of life, accounts for her rejection of drugs after she has experienced the effects of LSD. Her conclusion about drugs—that they are passive and therefore destructive of the desire to turn

the dream into reality—follows logically from her passionate belief in the ability of art to strengthen one's perception, "to create with a sense of color, to create houses, clothes, visions of cities, enjoyment of color not only as a passing, ephemeral, vanishing dream, *but as reality.*"

Her descriptions of her visits to Mexico have her own revivifying power, and as she recounts her life at Sierra Madre, she again makes intense the ordinary. One ought to mention her account of the composer Harry Partch, maker of his own amazing instruments, and of the film maker Ian Hugo, whose work frequently parallels in technique the fiction of Anaïs Nin.

It is in this volume of the diary that the death of Nin's father occurs. It will be remembered by readers of the earlier volumes that it was the desertion of the family by the father that led the writer as a very young girl to start the diary that has become one of the most important works of a woman writer of our century.

The death of Nin's mother is also described here, a death that had a greater impact upon the writer, and allowed her to see death's meaning in life as she discovers that children in their parents' death face a new birth as well as a tragic loss.

In this volume there is not only Anaïs Nin the diarist but Anaïs Nin the critic, whose *Novel of the Future*

is not the only place where her perceptions about the art of writing occur. As Pound noted long ago, only the writer can say anything significant about the work of art.

One cannot overlook the extravagance of the episode describing the meeting of Herlihy and Nin with Nina Gitana de la Primavera, the woman who lived with the Becks and had acted in plays of Gertrude Stein and of Kenneth Rexroth. Nina is like a character in a Nin novel. As the writer says, Nina is "dreaming awake," or is like Ophelia or a "young and beautiful Madwoman of Chailot." "It was my first encounter," the diarist reports, "with someone more removed from reality than I am. She was among the dreamers, the one who had broken through the sound barrier." What is characteristic about this episode is that Anaïs Nin welcomes Nina, sees her beauty, is not frightened by her madness, is able at the same time to hold the integrity of Nina's own vision and her own. Here is the Gitana who introduces herself "as if she had been born in Spain of Spanish gypsies," and here is Primavera "as if she had been born in Italy." And here is Anaïs Nin, truly international, an artist of the whole, whose own Spanish, French and Danish extraction allowed her to be at home in Paris, in Mexico, in Sierra Madre or New York—in the real world of the diary and the fleeting, wavering, shaped world of the city of the interior that is home, hearth and art. □

Forgeries of Ourselves

SELECTED POEMS: In Five Sets. By Laura Riding. W.W. Norton & Co. 96 pp. \$6.95. Paper \$1.95.

JUDITH THURMAN

"All men are deceived by the appearances of things," Heraclitus wrote, "even Homer, himself, the wisest man in Greece, who was deceived by boys catching lice: they said to him, 'what we have caught and killed we have left behind us, but what escapes us we bring with us.'" In 1933, Laura Riding renounced poetry and left her poems behind her. They were dead for her in that Heraclitean sense. She felt, at that time, she had reached "poetry's limit" as a "humanly perfect word use"—that even with the great agility she admits to have possessed, it was impossible, in her "poet-role," to catch truth.

It is interesting that the scale of the poems is a lifetime and not a half-life,

despite the fact that the poet was 37 when she stopped writing and is now in her 70s. It is almost as if she had been able to gauge, from the start, her own trajectory, the capacity of lung and wing, and had compressed her work in that proportion.

She is an anomaly among modern poets, especially those who try to surprise the "truth" in their own functioning—whose intricate inner works come in transparent cases. Their poetry resembles those wonderful telephones whose circuitry is exposed behind Lucite: all the confessions, emergencies, mistakes, trivia, impulses, obscenities, secrets, static—the dailiness of speech—visible. But Laura Riding carefully reformatizes her

Judith Thurman is a poet and critic. Her next book is a collection of essays on women poets for young readers, *I Became Alone*, which Atheneum will publish in the fall of 1975. At present, she is writing a biography of Isak Dinesen.

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IN THE NATION

inner life to conceal the intimate correspondences. The voice is aloof, even from itself—as deliberate as that of a religious utterance. Miss Riding finds contemporary poetry “suffused with a light of drab poetic secularity”; it lacks moral beauty for her. It is not surprising, then, that her own poems seem to have been written to outlast all familiarity.

In intent, they have a kinship with the conscientiousness of the 17th century, the struggle for grace revealed in the poetry of the Puritans, or of Herbert. Laura Riding wrestles with imperfection, with her own humanness, with the “corrupt oxygen of time.” She aspires and despairs; she courts the absolute in language and in feeling, and her poems are the score of her assaults upon and lapses from this tidemark.

Such an insatiable mistrust of the subjective is, I think, rather alien to most modern readers—a trial, a complicity more strenuous than they are used to. In a way, I was reminded of Gertrude Stein’s distinction between human nature and the human mind. Human nature was weather, sorrow, politics, identity, sex. The human mind was land seen from the air, and it wrote “what any human mind years after or years before can read, thousands of years or no years.” Laura Riding’s poems invite us to read them in that way—their form is a finality.

At its best, her language is desert language, dry and oracular. Its great resources take great effort to extract:

*This is the account of peace,
Why the rugged black of anger
Has an uncertain smile-border
Why crashing glass does not announce
The monstrous petal-advance of flowers,
Why singleness of heart endures
The mind coupled with other creatures.
Room for no more than love in such
dim passages
Where between kinds lie only
Their own uncertain edges.*

At less than its best, it is tightly coiled, almost impacted, and we don’t enjoy the full resilience of its intelligence. Sometimes this extreme difficulty, as in the desert, can become monotonous and even sterile. She has in her zeal parched it beyond rot, but beyond the capacity to bear life. The head swims, one begins to feel silly, to lose one’s place.

The “five sets” of the title work like gears, of different power and size, which engage our sense of her ideas, their movement, their development in sequence. We begin with the process of self-definition, the learning of our “littleness”; this separation is honed, refined. A sense of “whoness” and of “otherness” emerges,

and conflict. For this “whoness” interferes constantly with the awareness that is beyond it and greater than it—a peace, a balance, a fusion, Oriental in its rejection of identity, that has been cultivated, traditionally, through denial. Her self-suspicion is almost a refrain: “base lust and tenderness of self” . . . “self-choked falsity” . . . “self-forgery.”

In the late poems, the poet has failed to abstract herself. She has been unable to manipulate language to its perfection, to extricate herself from it. Being alive has meant being imperfect, and it is failure, misunderstanding, that make these poems the great ones. The easy, and sometimes pretentious remoteness of the early work is gone—it has been compromised by experience:

*None dances whom no hate stirs:
Who has not lost and loathed the loss,
Who does not feel deprived.
Slyest rebellion of the feet,
The chaste and tremulous disport
Of children, limbs in passionless wave—
None dances whom no hate stirs,
Or shall not stir.*

Laura Riding’s work has received, from a special public, the respect it deserves. Her notion of the “spiritual best in language” has influenced a special following. But her work has a radical aspect which has not, I think, been fully recognized. She has written some of the finest feminist poems I know: “I Am”; “The Divestment of Beauty”; and especially, “The Auspice of Jewels,” which is a classic by any standard. Before any of her contemporaries, she understood how women had been:

*Kept safe from flagrant realness
The forgeries of ourselves we were—
When to be alive as love feigned us
We must steal death and its wan
splendours
From the women of their sighs we
were.*

Her feminism seems to develop late in the poems—and has a direct bearing on her decision to abandon poetry. When she asks women to “forego the imbecile/Theology of loveliness,” she is also addressing herself as a poet. Men and literature have always “connived” against her truth, preferred her beauty; have always lied to her—and now both have reached what she calls in *The Telling*, “the half-point, the finality of divided being.”

Leaving poetry behind is, I think, the gesture not only of the artist who felt it was impossible to achieve wholeness through poetic language, but also of a woman whose self had been an “enemy” because it had never truly been her own. The artist deceived by appearances was the woman frustrated by her self-forgery. The poet-role and the sexual role oppressed her in the same way: they both “postponed human beginning,” as she says in *The Telling*.

Her poems have another sense when they are read with the caution she attaches to them: they “excite a sense of wherein the failure of poetry lies.” This failure, this finality, excites hope of an afterlife. “If, in writing, the truth is the quality of what is said, told, this is not a literary achievement: it is a simple human achievement.” □

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Violence has become so pervasive a motif in the contemporary arts of entertainment that it becomes convenient to organize its manifestations into sub-categories. Thus of two French films currently playing, Chabrol's *The Nada Gang* is political violence and *Le Trio Infernal*, by a new director, Francis Girod, is sexual violence. Girod's alleged comedy (so termed, I presume, because it elicits nervous giggles) could also be bracketed with *The Taking of Pelham One Two Three* as violence for profit, though the latter is a genital stimulant only in the sense that any deliberate infliction of pain, terror or sudden death may be thought erotic. It is also noteworthy that, as violence pre-empts the creative energies of the screen, excruciating details appear to suggest themselves spontaneously. It is unlikely that M. Girod saw *Chinatown* before his own work was completed, yet in both pictures a victim dies from a bullet in the eye. The probability is that this mode of execution is visually so effective that it recurs independently in widely separated cultures. Similarly, practitioners of violence, wherever they operate, are almost literally engulfed in blood—a tendency toward homicidal messiness that may be attributed either to the excellence of modern color photography or to the employment of overkill in contemporary techniques of warfare. In the second case, the prodigious shedding of blood would qualify as another demonstration that art abstracts from and intensifies the customs of the tribe.

Political violence has an important advantage over other forms of the theme in that the homicide is bipolar; instead of villains and victims, the scheme assumes mutual annihilation. Thus in *The Nada Gang* the killing is touched off by the decision of a small group of "revolutionaries" (I put the word in quotes because I could not discover what these furiously rhetorical chaps were being revolutionary about) to kidnap the American Ambassador in Paris, but they have no sooner done so than it becomes evident that the unspeakably corrupt French foreign office and security bureau will abet the predictable gun play to settle some power struggles of their own. Political violence also allows film directors to assert that they have been motivated by responsible social concerns, but Chabrol does not make the most of this because the motives on both sides are so obscure that no moral current is generated and because the general level of behavior is so stupid that it seems designed to implement a sensational fiction, not to diag-

nose a contemporary disease. It is relatively easy for the feckless desperadoes to snatch the Ambassador because he has a standing date to visit a brothel at the same hour on the same day every week. On the other hand, the killing begins immediately because the discreet arrival of the kidnappers is tipped off to the American diplomat's bodyguards waiting outside the house by the circumstance that every member of the gang is wearing new, identical and highly conspicuous sneakers. It almost seems that Chabrol wills the blood to flow.

From that point on, *The Nada Gang* is merely a sweat-inducing thriller, a circus of careening cars, drunken bravado, official torture, screams, double crosses, fire, smoke, helicopters and sprawled bodies. *Nada* means "nothing"—which presumably is where Chabrol places the moral excellence of his antagonists; it is hard to establish a position of social responsibility on the basis of *nada*.

Le Trio Infernal is a variant on a very familiar device of popular entertainment—the defrauding of insurance companies by taking out policies on the lives of persons whose deaths are imminent or can be expedited. It differs from earlier examples—*Double Indemnity*, for example—in that the multiple killings are carried out in an atmosphere of sexual fever and in ways designed to test the viewer's resistance to nausea. What we have here is Michel Piccoli in another of his impersonations of clammy respectability, aided in this case by Romy Schneider and Mascha Gonska, playing a pair of German sisters who want French nationality (the period is post-World War I) and lots of money. Georges Sarret (Piccoli), a war hero and a well-established attorney in Marseilles, is also a libertine whose larcenous inventions are so horrifying that one assumes the games excite him as much as does the profit. The sisters are alike in their eagerness to copulate with him, either by turns or simultaneously, but differ in that Philomène (Schneider) shares Georges' taste for bizarre executions, whereas Catherine (Gonska) is occasionally rendered giddy by the realization of what she is doing. As, for example, when she and her companions are carrying buckets of viscous human remains decomposed in acid from an upstairs bathroom to an outside disposal pit. Or when she is making love to a girl dying of tuberculosis as part of a regimen designed to hasten that victim's demise. Stuff like this is said to be so

extreme as to be funny, but I suspect that in order to relish the humor of it one has to dehumanize oneself more completely than most people will find agreeable. Some years ago I had to work briefly but intensively with a collection of photographs made in the just-liberated Nazi concentration camps. The experience cured me of any tendency I may have had to chuckle over the idea of reducing human beings to garbage. □

THEATRE

HAROLD CLURMAN

I love *Love for Love* (Helen Hayes Theatre). William Congreve wrote it in 1695, when he was 25, and he set it forth as satire. But there can't be much satire in it for us today. It is now pure fun, a glittering frolic. There is wisdom in its wit, but we are not compelled to weigh or assess it. It sparkles before us and transports us to a realm essentially aesthetic. It triumphs in images which provoke wonder and delight; language is its chief glory.

The feast of words does not smack of "quotation"—as Shakespeare does! It is modern language, on the whole free of obscurities and odd locutions. All the words strike our ears as if they were never before spoken or heard. They retain a marvelous freshness; they are of the finest vintage. Even the slightly starched or stiff structure of the period rhetoric enchants through unfamiliarity.

The Phoenix production is one of the best in that company's history. Harold Prince, who staged *Love For Love*, has since *Candide* shown himself a happily inventive master of "ceremonies." He gives the play an American, almost musical comedy reading. Songs by Hugh Wheeler and Paul Gemignani, more or less in the mode of the time, have been added. No English director would have done the play quite this way, yet the American fun-house note does not abuse Congreve; it accommodates him to our temper.

Douglas Higgins' setting is a jolly collage of late 17th-century objects; all the bric-a-brac and furniture are admirably chosen without giving the impression of being on display. Franne Lee's costumes too are not merely pretty; they are right.

The actors do themselves proud. John McMartin is very funny in crackpot senility—such roles are his forte—Charles Kimbrough is grotesquely amusing as the eloquently egregious Tattle, George Ede as the stodgily shrewd and

yet foolish Sir Sampson serves as an anchor to the flighty proceedings, and Marybeth Hurt, as the sexual novice, Miss Prue, is cutely captivating.

An even more masterly production is the Royal Shakespeare Company's *Sherlock Holmes* (Broadhurst Theatre). Here again we are summoned to a realm which is, in a very different sense, most ingratiatingly *theatre*. We lend ourselves to its make-believe as to a fantastic fable and, as with all good fables, there is something real in it.

The *Sherlock Holmes* of Conan Doyle and William Gillette offered in 1899 that indispensable quality of suspense expected from plays of crime and its detection. (Conan Doyle was in his own fashion an innovator. He brought a late Victorian modernity, a touch of "science," the semblance of deductive wizardry, to the long-established English tradition of the romantic thriller.) What is suspenseful to us now is not the artful tracking down of felons by a super-clever gentleman sleuth but the histrionic ingenuity and stage devices by which Holmes's exploits are carried out.

Still, something of the reason for the original Conan Doyle fascination remains. The London of Conan Doyle's day was in the main correct, orderly, genteel. How wonderful, then, to show its underside, its dark secrets, its nefarious mysteries, its corruption. (*The Yellow Book* was also part of the period's "sub-culture.") Inside, solid wooden comfort and wooden people; outside, fog and frightful doings. The English and the Americans (who to some extent were also then brought up to profess, and as much as possible to practice, rectitude) developed a semi-surreptitious appetite for its opposite. One aspect of the novelty in Holmes is his addiction to morphine. What a shiver that must have given the audience in 1899! It was not a social or a clinical matter to them: it was awful wickedness. With all this, Holmes is a moral person! He upholds the law and virtue itself. Cynical and almost misanthropic on the surface, he is ever on the side of the right, always gallant, imperturbably British, a knight in mufti.

A production of *Sherlock Holmes* might be converted to parody. This the Royal Shakespeare Company avoids. It chooses to be *seriously* stagy. Everything is sharpened and heightened enough for us to assent to it as if all were "real," while we are never allowed to forget that it is all a splendid game. Everything takes on a special glamour: the glamour of the brown and misty London of another day, the day when we treasured the good and were appalled by the bad,

and hoped to see it eliminated. Above all, there is a feeling of the theatre as a place where things, whatever else they are, must be *extraordinary*.

What is especially engaging in the play as here done is that its substantive interest is not the trapping of the guilty and the rewarding of the blameless, but the "intellectual" battle between the hero and his antagonist, the redoubtable and ghoulis Professor Moriarty. They are pitted against each other like two principals of life—both brainy, both powerful of will, both enduring.

And how they are played! With humor, with a precision that renders them picturesque in every turn and grimace and in an astonishing boldness of projection, orally and graphically.

John Wood of the equine head, is lean, towering, unflappable and pale with mental tension and professional purpose, a demon of benevolence; Moriarty, cadaverously thin, is the fantastically elongated demon of malevolence. Philip Locke plays that part in a manner which might be hilarious—it is certainly witty—if it weren't so consummately spectral. Both actors have resounding voices, exaggerated for characterization by Locke, but it is part of the production's style for almost all the actors to employ a tone several decibels above the naturalistic.

The entire cast is excellent and very large. There are also many sets, just as there used to be in the good old days! The actors are members of a company which has played together for some time now in a varied repertory. They have been directed by Frank Dunlop who has a genius for outlandish comedy and theatrical extravagance. (*Scapino* was his achievement.) Much of the brilliance of *Sherlock Holmes* is due to Dunlop's talent, although it would hardly have emerged if he had had a less "prepared" roster of actors. The Royal Shakespeare Company has no equal on the English-speaking stage, except perhaps the British National Theatre.

Together with these assets Dunlop has benefited by the collaboration of Carl Toms, whose sets and other scenic effects are ingenious and at times sensationally apt.

Mert & Phil by Anne Burr, which opened the New York Shakespeare Festival season at the Vivian Beaumont Theatre has been rather too harshly dealt with by most reviewers.

The first thing to be said about the play is that its theme is not the psychological depression caused in a woman by the removal of her breast but the maddening dreariness of many marriages among blue-collar workers. There is

comedy in Ms. Burr's depiction of the environment, and there is pain. Certain scenes and speeches possess genuine pathos. The play suffers from the unresolved mixture of dismally farcical elements with the quiet truthfulness that is also unquestionably present. A proper blending or unity might perhaps have been achieved by cutting and by reducing the monotonous repetition in both the laughable and sentimental aspects of the play. (Not even such retrograde characters as those here on view are so crudely and exclusively fixed on sex.) Then too the direction and setting—they are interlocked—emphasize the play's pitfalls rather than overcome them.

Still, the evening was saved for me by Estelle Parsons as the sorry Mert of the title. Deeply hurt by the burden of sordid stupidity, she keeps smiling with the strained look of old habit together with incipient and festering anger. Estelle Parsons plays the part modestly in subdued colors, the victim of wounds of which she is barely conscious, even as they are inflicted upon her. A signal performance.

Tennessee Williams' *Battle of Angels*, which he wrote in 1939 (never before done in New York), is related to his *Orpheus Descending* of 1957 as, *mutatis mutandis*, Chekhov's *The Wood Demon* is to *Uncle Vanya*. There is a similarity in story line, many of the characters appear in both plays, several speeches recur, yet they are different plays. Having directed *Orpheus Descending*, I shall refrain from a comparison as to the relative merits of the Williams plays. Suffice it to say here that more than the seeds of Williams' talent are already evident in the early play. What is more pertinent for me to say at this juncture is that I believe everything Williams has written or writes for the theatre is worth seeing.

The production of *Battle of Angels*, directed by Marshall Mason for the Circle Repertory Company, now housed for its main events at the Sheridan Square Playhouse, 99 Seventh Avenue South, is marked by considerable animation and is well set by John Lee Beatty. The production's weakness is the inappropriate casting of the central roles. The best acting is in some of the minor parts—especially that of Conchata Ferrell, who seasons the role of a woman painter subject to "visions" with an odd note of comedy.

Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Banzi Is Dead*, dealing with a South African situation, is an impressive play that deserves special attention which I plan to give it in my forthcoming column. □

ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

An exhibition, "Contemporary Graphic Protest . . . in the Grand Tradition," is at the Pratt Graphics Center Gallery, 831 Broadway (until December 31). It is a broad selection of prints made by Ralph E. Shikes following closely his own book *The Indignant Eye* (Beacon Press, \$12.50). He considers that "'protest art' has become a pejorative term in recent years," but plans to revalidate it by his studies. This view suggests that his book was written rather earlier than its publication last year. Both the book and the exhibition are signs, among many others, of the increased prestige of protest as a function of art. The politicization of the artist, in relation to civil rights and opposition to the war in Vietnam, the women's movement and black art, certainly includes a revival of protest art. The potential of protest was made explicit by the Los Angeles Peace Tower in 1965, the Collage of Indignation at New York University in 1967, and the Judson Memorial Church Flag Show in 1970. Shikes has more company than he realizes.

Didactic and dissident forms of art, strong in the 1930s, tapered off in the 1940s. It seems that the iconography of protest was capable of handling domestic issues but not international ones. With the United States mobilized for World War II, an artist who protested the Nazis, for example, would be supporting the government, thus losing the essential adversary stance. (It was not until the war in Vietnam, in which protest was of course oppositional, that international subjects were treated.)

What is the grand tradition referred to in the title of the Pratt exhibition? It turns out to be "the tradition of dissent against tyranny or injustice or ignobility," to quote Shikes. Does this really meet the requirements of a definition of tradition in which, at the least, demonstrable continuities should be shown? Oddly, Shikes has taken a term usually applied (when it is used at all) to the classically derived culture of the Renaissance. Why should he want to aestheticize his material? It is as if he were trying to make topical and often expendable graphic art more respectable by giving it a grandiose time frame.

In fact, what gives protest art its edge is its specificity, its naming of names, not its longevity or supposed timelessness. Shikes knows this but fails to act consistently on the idea. In his book he defines protest as "social or political criticism of specific ways of life, institu-

tions, conditions or circumstances, not of man's general spiritual malaise or discontent with his own psyche, or general statements of man's fate." This distinction is admirably to the point, but why does he then try to make resistance to injustice into an absolute? It does seem that the theorists of protest art, instead of accepting the implications of a topical art—high impact but maybe short-lived—hanker for the "universality" of what I will call nonprotest art. Shikes writes on Goya: "the 'Disasters' is a heart-breaking lament for the suffering man is capable of inflicting on his fellow men." Well, yes, but are platitudes of this sort the only point of protest art? Protest art should be more like news stories than the editorials written about them later. Surely Shikes is sliding from the specifics of Goya's war to those matters of malaise and fate that he warns against.

The ambition to turn political art into a world picture of permanent alienation is not all that motivates Shikes, and in other respects he gives a compact survey of satire and social criticism from the 15th century to a few years ago. Another book, however, shows the desire for a world picture based on protest art at its most pretentious and reckless. This is *The New Humanism* (Praeger Publishers, \$13.50) in which an array of paintings with Expressionistic traces is presented in a bureaucratic classification that includes Metaphysical Humanism, Existential Humanism and Absurd Humanism. Barry Schwartz's formula is that art with an expressive human image in it is better than art that lacks it because the conventions of representation can all be equated with tragic postures. The fact that Shikes is not immune to such melodrama points up the problem: how to discuss protest art without resorting to generalities about the human condition?

Writers on protest art face problems on two fronts. The lesser of these is political: the artists' causes are, on the whole, those that are acceptable to the art world, which is where this art, like everyone else's, circulates. On the other hand, the drift of aesthetics has been away from subject matter and this holds true not only of Abstract art but of figurative art itself, which is often discussed more in terms of mood than narrative, of formal composition rather than description. Thus, while the targets of protest art are likely to be acceptable, there are reservations in its audience as to whether they constitute a proper subject for art at all.

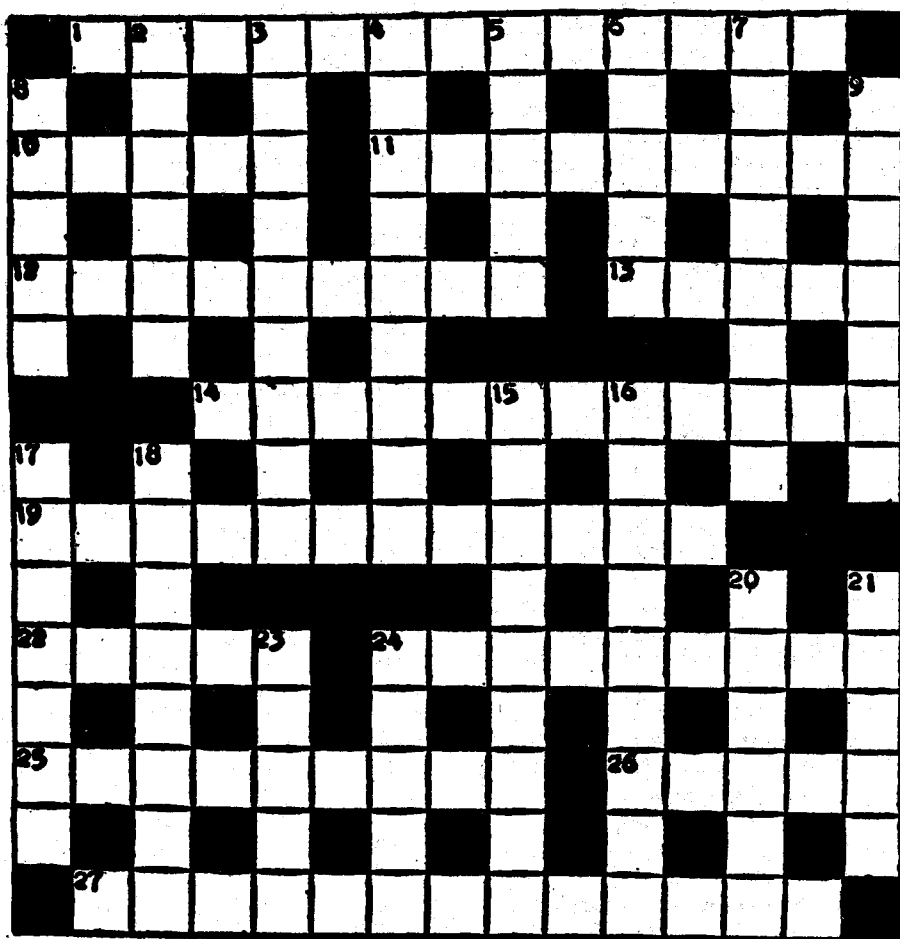
Shikes's book is devoted to prints and drawings and it is appropriate to quote here William M. Ivins, Jr., a curator of prints at the Metropolitan Museum, now

deceased: "The story of prints is not, as many people seem to think, that of a minor art form but that of a most powerful method of communication between men and of its effects upon Western European thought and civilization." That was published twenty years ago in his brilliant *Prints and Visual Communication*, but its relevance has not abated. If Shikes had thought more about prints in terms of the history of communications and less of the transfer of established aesthetics from painting and sculpture to prints, he could have avoided his Goya blurb. There is however a feeling of inferiority that hangs about the history of prints, and Shikes has not entirely dispelled it. In Schwartz's book there is a comparable problem: he is writing out of feelings of inferiority, derived from the tentative state of the aesthetics of figurative art compared to the more fully formulated aesthetics of Abstract art. Schwartz writes hastily and stridently in an effort to establish immediately a base of authority, but of course the effect is the reverse of what he intends. Art criticism has no more coped with the discussion of realism than art historians have with the history of prints in Ivins' terms. Any synoptic account of protest art must deal with both difficulties.

The problem of topical imagery, as compared to generalized subjects, is raised and solved by Philip Guston's paintings at David McKee, 140 E. 63rd Street (until December 18). This former Abstract Expressionist held a startling show in 1970 in which he dismissed Abstract to present a rough, legible imagery of Klansmen and victims, a theme sustained in his new paintings called the "Ominous Land Series." The victims are shown by piles of shoes, as at Buchenwald, and by upside-down burials, in which booted feet stick out of the ground like sprouting corpses. On one hand there are clear references to hooded Klansmen and to the mesomorphic physical types associated with hard-hat reaction. On the other hand, the artist shares their heftiness, so that an acknowledgment of their humanity goes along with images of their barbarism. "Smoking in Bed," in which a potato-headed figure lies surrounded by bedside objects, fluctuates between boundaries of self-reference and external caricature. In color, Guston retains the flushed pink of his best-known Abstract paintings, but otherwise they are a compelling blend of political and personal imagery, not generalized but specific. This specificity derives from both the target of his commentary and the body image of the artist. There is no resort to meanings in excess of the given historical situation. □

Crossword Puzzle No. 1562

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

- 1 Multiply by two if you want a number between 10 and 99. (6,7)
- 10 A light, sharp sound associated with prison. (5)
- 11 There's little credit given to the code being broken, having worked on something with a needle. (9)
- 12 The back row finds Sherlock in disguise shows signs of age. (9)
- 13 Country style? (5)
- 14 and 18 down Tom can't be sacked if you do spill the beans. (3,3,3,2,3,3)
- 19 One shouldn't 14-18 with something like this, though one might so try and get dust. (3,3,6)
- 22 Though a bad shot, he was presumably good with another weapon. (5)
- 24 Routed between French and British lines? (9)
- 25 One probably never makes a bow like this. (9)
- 26 One old magician, or a semblance thereof. (5)
- 27 Repeatedly one might say it's just one profit after another! (5,3,5)

DOWN

- 2 How to make twigs rise so out of shape? (6)
- 3 Present in the East, as a tip. (9)
- 4 Despite its name, you can come down

with it! (9)

- 5 They might be necessary to press clubs, perhaps. (5)
- 6 A leader of people? (5)
- 7 It would never be an inside job to work on this. (8)
- 8 Steer in the middle of such boats? Certainly not! (5)
- 9 Flatter in the extreme. (7)
- 15 Replaced with an equivalent. (9)
- 16 Bars are probably filled if one is doing it for a number. (9)
- 17 That old greasy kid stuff? (7)
- 18 See 14 across.
- 20 It might turn red litmus paper blue. (6)
- 21 One's tongue is violet! (Perhaps it's summer!) (6)
- 23 Is in a state of upheaval, for a mountain. (5)
- 24 Country dishes, possibly. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1561

ACROSS: 1 Public address; 9 Races; 10 At any rate; 11 Onwards; 12 Aligned; 13 Ictus; 14 Freemason; 16 Threefold; 18 Topic; 19 Buoyant; 21 Sextant; 22 Editorial; 23 Cadiz; 24 Rasher of bacon.
DOWN: 1 Periodic tables; 2 Backwater; 3 Insures; 4 Amass; 5 Dead ahead; 6 Elysium; 7 Spain; 8 Leading citizen; 14 Front line; 15 Sephardic; 17 Enamors; 18 Taxicab; 20 Osier; 21 Salvo.

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